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The Reading Teacher

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Literature for Children and Youth

h i j k l m n

WHEN we think of literature for children we almost invariably associate it with our good friend of children and books, Dr. Leland B. Jacobs. Dr. Jacobs has done more to bring back to American classrooms the importance of having children read good books than any other American educator. In this, many of us feel like the horse in Marguerite Henry's *Justin Morgan Had a Horse*: "It's all right, Joel, don't be taking it so hard." He was steaming and tired, but it was good to be near the boy again. It was good. He nickered softly." It is indeed with pride and gratitude that we announce Dr. Jacob's guest editorship for this issue which deals with literature for children and youth. He has written the introduction and has secured the services of eight teachers in telling some practical things we can do to foster the reading of good and better books. I am sure you will find these articles stimulating and thought-provoking.

In a similar vein, Miss Mate Graye Hunt explains how to get the right child and the right book together. Of interest to remedial teachers is an article by Dr. Margery R. Bernstein on working with cardiac children. The report of the ninth annual NART conference gives a number of succinct points on corrective and remedial reading. The ideas expressed are significant for all teachers of reading. Dr. Gray, in his president's message, discusses the merger and reveals some plans for the future.

Your editorial and advisory boards are making plans for the contents of next year's issues of *The Reading Teacher*. Teachers (both former ICIRI and NART members) are urged to send the editor any suggestions and recommendations which they may wish to make. Only as we try to meet your needs in teaching reading can we be successful. Write today.

The April issue will feature reading programs for mentally gifted children. Dr. Paul Witty, who knows what is being done for these children better than anyone else we know, will act as guest editor. He has secured eight writers, most of them classroom teachers, to tell you what they are doing. You will not want to miss the exciting April number of the journal.

The Editor.

And Now . . .

The Guest Editor's Introduction: *Literature for Children and Youth*

A QUESTION which keeps pestering me is this: How does it happen that, with so much good literature for children and youth now in print, schools are so reluctant to capitalize on its potentialities for exciting educational experiences?

- Is our puritanical tradition still so strong and deep that enjoyment or pleasure is, at least inwardly, frowned upon?
- Are we coming into a post-literate era in our civilization?
- Does the symbolization in literature in some way have less appeal than other forms of expression?
- Are we so bombarded with printed matter that we do not prize very highly the written word?
- Are our school practices so ice-bound that we cannot steer in a new direction?
- Are we unaware, as school people, that this great store of good current literature for children and youth exists?

If we are unaware that this literature is in existence, then it seems high time that we extend our acquaintanceship.

- Are you much better acquainted with textbooks than with trade books?
- Do you close your mind to books that are not the so-called classics?
- Do you have in your classroom, readily available, up-to-date bibliographies of books for children or youth?
- Do you regularly read reviews of new books, for the age-group whom you teach, in professional journals, newspapers, and magazines?
- Do you browse among books for the young in bookstores and libraries?
- Do you keep a file of publishers' catalogs?

If we are relying on "1900 model" practices that may be outmoded, then we need to alert ourselves to the dangers of such complacency. We will need to try out some of the practices that "the Teacher of 1956" is using:

- Do you read to your group from new books, sampling chapters, giving previews, or reading aloud some whole volumes?
- Do you provide in your program for the sharing of literature by the students?

- Do you capitalize on the individual's enthusiasms and concerns to guide him to literature that may satisfy his purposes for more reading?
- Do you save some of the school day's regularly scheduled reading time for the enjoyment of literature?
- Do you have immediately accessible in your classroom sufficient books of literary merit that can be read by each individual?
- Do you avoid practices that tend to dampen desires to read, such as reading from prescribed, graded lists or giving routine book reports?

If we are afraid that entertainment is an unwarranted use of school time, then we may need to look more perceptively at life around us and note whether or not children, young people, and adults are as well-equipped in entertaining themselves as would seem desirable in a culture such as ours.

- Do we, as a people, need to be more effectual in making worthy use of our leisure time?
- Are the arts only a superficial, and hence expendable, aspect of culture?
- As a people, do we read for pleasure at unusually high levels of taste and skill interpretation?
- Is aesthetic enjoyment something worthy of being fostered in the education of the young?
- Do agencies and institutions other than the school serve as the prime influence for educating children and youth in creatively, constructively entertaining themselves?
- Is the school truly teaching children to read if it concentrates its attention almost exclusively on the attainment of reading skills?

Every school system—indeed, every classroom teacher—must answer such questions as these as decisions about the time and attention which literature shall receive in the school program are made. The literature is available. The teaching of reading is a firm commitment of the school. The reading of literature can be an aesthetically illuminating experience. Taste in reading can be developed. As teachers, are we sensibly and sensitively doing what we can to get children and good books together?

Leland B. Jacobs

Guest Editor

Why Literature for Children and Youth?

by FIVE TEACHERS

● Representing Different
School Levels

FROM THE BEGINNINGS of American education, literature has had a place in the school program. While the purposes for the inclusion of literature as a curriculum experience have shifted from time to time, nonetheless prose and poetry have always been considered appropriate ingredients in the school day.

What value does literature have for today's children and youth? Here are the responses of five teachers to this question.

In the Kindergarten¹

Leave him alone with his picture books and let him wonder and make up his own stories—but let him hear what it says on each page—let him know what more there is beside the pictures.

If it means something to him he will take it to himself and recreate it to fit his own purpose—and your only clue of the success of the story will be the look on his face; the way he sits so still, when he says "it feels good," or "what does it say about this fire engine," or "read it again—" or even "we hid the book because we liked it too much—we didn't want it to go back to the library."

Give him time with his books—and give him your time—help him see that books are for fun, lots of fun—that they are also to find out new

things—and above all, help him realize that he can make books too—he can make up his own stories and draw his own pictures—through feeling a little the process involved in writing, he can at his own level feel more what is involved in producing literature and how best to evaluate it—it will help him to know the "good" from the "not so good."

Be continually evaluating and searching out books yourself—learn to be discriminating along with the children—and be true to your standards. Don't compromise on literature—choose the very best literary diet you can find (if you do the choosing)—BUT don't prevent the child from picking up inferior literature—instead, help him see the difference in value to him. Through his experience with books, he will see his own world and its problems with different meaning. If guided, he will use these experiences in literature to enhance himself as an individual and he will mature as a result.

In the Early-Elementary Grades²

Children learn in a continuing cycle of exploration and discovery. Their

¹Elaine Macmann, Kindergarten Teacher, Agnes Russell Center Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York.

²Louise Burleigh, Teacher, First Grade, John Swett School, San Francisco, California.

world is approached with a spontaneous, uninhibited and open-minded curiosity. Small children have few preconceived values; the ones they do have are logically based on experience. From experience, a child learns to respond to life in a unique manner.

When children enter school, qualities of spontaneity, curiosity, and open-mindedness are not left in their pre-school past. It becomes the job of the teacher to preserve these qualities and to provide experiences rich enough to insure a continuous development of the child's already creative, sensitive approach to life.

The primary years are crucial years, for in this period children will either be encouraged to respond to things spontaneously and creatively or forced into a pattern of conformity that robs them of their previous unique initiative. Real danger signs are class uniformity in language, art, and thought.

Literature is a distinctive medium through which a teacher can preserve and further originality. A child's mind is stimulated constantly by what he reads, sees, and hears. His questioning nature demands response to the many experiences he encounters. Given the opportunity, a child will observe and evaluate the contents of books, quite free from many adult values and prejudices. Observations resulting from stimulating prose, poetry, or illustrations are ready-made springboards for spontaneous expression.

A child is a very dignified person. Even at the primary level, good literature does not "talk down" to children. On the contrary, the best literature presents thought-provoking, profound

ideas—ideas children may already have, but are unable to express. In order to grow in self-esteem, children need the satisfaction of having their thoughts and actions valued as worthy and dignified. Through literature this can be accomplished.

Children are the most accepting, appreciative audience imaginable. Today the best efforts of some of our finest authors and artists are being devoted to children. The young deserve the opportunity of being exposed to fine art in many forms. We should provide this opportunity through the accessible medium of literature.

Books that are artistically done provide vicarious adventures and explorations into the world so challenging to children. Pleasures and information that a child could not receive firsthand are offered to him in literature. Books also create a valid area of brief escape for children, who have not yet developed the multitude of adult escape mechanisms.

Good literature, therefore, is an essential item in the primary grades if the enchanting spontaneity and creativity of early childhood is to be preserved. Books that are worthy of a responsive child audience will not only entertain—they will dignify a child's feelings and ideas as well as enrich his sensitivity to life.

In the Later-Elementary Grades³

Reading literature and reading for fun are often equated in the mind of the teacher. It is perhaps dangerous for a teacher to think in these terms

³Norman Fountain, Teacher, Third Grade, South School, New Canaan, Connecticut.

lest he minimize what is merely fun when the pressure of work is mounting. Reading literature should be fun for the child and for the teacher but the values of the fun are far too important for it to be made the poor relation of the school program.

To the child in the intermediate grades, reading can be not only an essential tool in school work but also a challenging source of recreation. As he selects, tests, and samples from the infinite variety of books available to him, he lays the foundations of reading habits that will last throughout his life. The teacher, with this in mind, can make suggestions from his experience, open new areas for discovery, and encourage discussion about books. The teacher can also read samples of good writing aloud to his class for hearing language well used will help the child in his own creative language activity.

The individual differences among children in interest and ability become more pronounced as the children progress through school. In the never ending search for appropriate materials to serve these different tastes, selections from children's literature can be very successful. There is fantasy for the romantic, fact for the scientific, realism for the socially aware, and adventure for the boisterous spirit. While children's literature can cater to all these inequalities within a group it can also establish social equality within the group. The sensitive, shy, or slow-reading child is equal to any other when he is reading for his own interest from a book of his own selection.

Children's literature can be very valuable to the intermediate grade child. It can introduce variety in literary form. It can demonstrate reading for different purposes. It can fulfill nearly all demands for diversity, satisfy completely dissimilar needs, and produce citizens with natural tendencies to read.

In the Junior High School⁴

The problems of adolescents which are usually thought of as characterizing their developmental level are directly related to the value of literature for the junior high school. Adolescents are going through a period of great physical and emotional change; they are moving out from a self-centered narrow world toward an increasing awareness of the world around them and of contemporary problems. Moreover, they are seeking independence from home and adult authority; they are frequently motivated by a love of adventure and excitement. From these growth and development patterns of adolescents stem the values in a junior high school literature program no matter what the curricular structure of the school may be. If the school is dedicated to helping children move toward greater maturity in their social-personal development, literature is an important means of achieving this goal.

First, literature may help students develop a set of personal values by demonstrating what is of worth and what is not as revealed in the literature of the past and the present. At least

⁴L. Jane Stewart, Teacher, University School, Ohio State University.

they may obtain a perspective of the values held by themselves and others.

Then, too, literature provides opportunities to solve individual and group problems. The insecurity which often results from the struggle to become independent in thinking and action find adolescents in need of guidance. Insight into common problems may be obtained by examining the stories of others facing similar situations. It is at this point that the teacher and the librarian are provided with excellent guidance opportunities.

Literature has value, too, in satisfying the present interest of students and extending and deepening those interests. Junior high students often reach a plateau in their reading where they are content to remain. The involvement of students in the vicarious experiences of others at a more mature level will often stimulate them to widen and deepen their reading horizons.

In the expanding world of the adolescent, the opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship are often forcibly brought to their attention. An ever-widening acquaintance with literature—books, newspapers, magazines—can deepen this awareness, develop understandings, interpret the role of the adult in the society in which they are growing up.

Moreover, the ever increasing amount of literature by excellent writers designed to meet the junior-high student's interests and needs can sharpen the sensitivity of young people to quality in writing and raise the level at which students find satisfaction in reading.

Finally, literature in the junior high school can extend and develop personal enjoyment of reading if the students are convinced that reading is fun. It will provide the temporary escape that everyone needs and in addition will result in future citizens who have firmly established the reading habit.

In the Senior High School⁵

Can any single body of literature remain constant throughout the ages to satisfy the diverse needs of our high school young people? The challenge of guiding the reading habits of over seven million high school young people becomes clear as we attempt to phrase an answer to this question.

Many of our students in secondary schools today come from homes where the reading and discussion of literature is an accomplished skill. Many others come from homes where books of almost any type are unknown. The school must assume the responsibility of giving creative and rewarding experiences with literature to each student and of helping him learn to evaluate the variety of literary materials he encounters outside the school. Most of our high school young people today consider the visual and auditory symbols of the radio broadcast, the television program, and the motion picture as much a "literature" to be enjoyed and understood as the symbols of print. From these varied media, they select many of the attitudes and values by which they live and much of the entertainment by which they

⁵Robert Shafer, Lecturer, Division of Language Arts and Humanities, San Francisco State College, California.

escape the tensions of a complex world. Knowing this, we as teachers must plan classroom experiences where our students can know the best expression in print, cartoon, recording, and film *as literature*. From the resulting consciousness of the interrelationships in art, and the growth in ability to evaluate and appreciate, will come new dimensions of aesthetic experience for each individual.

As teachers we also have a responsibility for bringing into the school literature of such a variety that each student can find personal meaning and self-realization within that literature. As a group our young people are a mature, sensitive, serious audience with a wide range of reading abilities, purposes, and interests. They need an abundance of materials suited to their general level of maturity. Younger teen-agers, for example, may find satisfaction in reading about the exploits of sport and folk heroes, or the experiences of young people of their own age in this and other cultures. Older adolescents with more sophisticated reading interests may tend toward regional or historical fiction, biography, or poetic literature which asks serious questions about the conduct of life and its meaning.

With the help of teachers who know young people as well as they know literature, high school students will

choose the literature which is right for them at a particular time in their lives. No single book, author, or literary genre can adequately meet their unique demands, but by creative teaching we can share with them a variety of literary materials in print, recording, and film. By sharing these effectively we can provide a literary context for them in their search for self-realization and autonomy which is the real outcome of growth in the reading and knowing of literature.

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(Continued from Page 143)

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Guidance in Independent Reading

by EVELYN WENZEL

● SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

What Is Independent Reading?

The three-year old, instead of running as usual with her book to daddy and demanding that he read to her, settles on the floor and examines carefully and systematically each page from first to last. At times she uses her finger to point out and her voice to identify some object on the page, but all to herself and for herself.

The five-year old indicates his presence as the teacher takes attendance by holding up a large card on which is printed his name. The six-year old combs the evening paper, mutilating it in the process, as she cuts out the now familiar words: *look, oh, see, mother, etc.* The eight-year old sits in the reading corner engrossed in the adventures of the Small family, while the ten-year old consults book after book from the library shelf as he seeks information about early forms of transportation.

Each of these children in his own way has achieved some degree of independence in reading. Each is truly "on his own" in one sense, yet each is operating in an environment "planned" in some degree by adults and, if the need arises, could readily find a parent, a librarian, or a teacher to help him.

At the same time, there are factors other than the "planned" ones in the environments of each of these children. And so each, depending upon the unique qualities of his own per-

sonal environment, brings purposes of his own to the reading he is doing. The degree of consciousness of purpose would vary widely and adults can only guess at what some of them are. At three it seems important to do what mother and daddy are doing; at five one has learned a new game; at six a "homework" assignment itself is a delightful experience; as early as eight one already can have learned that there are ways to forget for a time that recesses are no fun when no one asks you to play; while at ten doing an assigned lesson is taken for granted.

What Is Teacher Guidance?

Because no environment, however carefully planned, can be the same for all children, teachers of necessity must assume a guidance role. A recent yearbook relates guidance "to all those things which adults do *consciously* to assist an individual child to live as fully and effectively as he is able." (2) A teacher is guiding children's independent reading, then, to the extent that she attempts to see children as individuals. Her guidance activities may be direct or indirect, subtle or obvious, but never merely incidental or accidental. She must, in addition to knowing children as individuals, know books and how to bring the two together.

What Must a Teacher Know?

Independent reading at any stage presumes that certain reading skills

have been acquired. It is unfortunate that the current controversies over reading have so spotlighted the skill acquiring aspect of reading instruction that the whole point of learning to read has tended to be obscured. Teachers at all levels, of course, must seriously concern themselves with the teaching of skills, but preoccupation with this job must not cause them to lose sight of the goal—that of producing independent readers who not only *can* read, but *do* read.

A Teacher Must Know Books

The job of becoming reasonably familiar with what books are available today for children is a prodigious one, much less keeping informed about the large numbers that are currently appearing. A study (9) made in 1949 indicated that teachers believe that the books that were good for them as children are still the best and most popular for children today. Fortunately, there are available a number of well annotated book lists (6) as well as several excellent sources of reviews of new books (3) for teachers interested in familiarizing themselves with this rapidly expanding field.

Today's teacher must know more about the content of children's books. His circle of acquaintances should include from among the present generation of book characters such celebrities as Homer Price, Janie Moffat, Little Sal, Elmer Elevator of dragon fame, Mrs. Mallard and her family, Papa Small, Henry Huggins, Johnny Tremain, and the Ingalls family. He should know the wide variety of types of books available: historical, region-

al, intercultural, and international fiction, modern folk and fairy tales, and nature and science fiction. Modern biography and informational literature of all kinds will be a revelation to the new explorer of the children's book field. Nor should he fail to broaden his familiarity with the wealth of poetry available today.

Beyond merely becoming familiar with the range and kinds of books available for children, the teacher concerned with guidance of children's reading must gradually learn to evaluate, to "sound out" books for qualities that indicate their authors' awareness of the deeper needs of children. Are the authors of modern books dealing with such universal childhood "problems" as the fears and misunderstandings of pre-school children; the facing of a new experience such as starting to school by the six-year old; the rejection of adult standards by the pre-adolescent, and the problems relating to manners, first dates, and choosing careers by the adolescent? To what extent are books dealing honestly and realistically with problems growing out of the many groups that make up our society — groups formed because of socio-economic, racial, religious, occupational, and national differences; problems growing out of the increasingly transient nature of many occupational groups; problems created by broken homes, working mothers and adults other than parents living in the home?

Answers to such questions can be found by research studies, of course, and more of these need to be made. But any teacher can begin finding an-

swers for herself by reading children's books. She need not worry about where to start and what are the "best" books. Her own taste and evaluative sense will be built more effectively if her initial samplings are unselected. Once she has sampled widely, a book such as Arbuthnot's *Children and Books* (1) may help her to establish criteria with more assurance.

Children's books may be evaluated in still another respect by those interested in guiding children's reading. Sample's study in adult fiction (10) of the assumptions about life that authors reveal unconsciously and that readers tend to accept uncritically, suggests the need for similarly examining children's books. Are children, as were the adults in Sample's study, taking from the books they read assumptions that complex situations can be attributed to one cause; that the familiar and traditional are good, the unfamiliar and new are to be viewed with suspicion; and that customs and values built up in the past are reliable yardsticks for us to use today? Again, more research studies are needed, but teachers themselves, reading critically, can begin to become aware of the assumptions in children's books (12).

A Teacher Must Know Children as Individuals

Any teacher knows from her own experience that children reveal highly individual interests in reading if they have a wide variety of books from which to choose. Studies tell us, in addition, that children's responses to reading are highly individual and may reflect deep personal emotions (8,

11). Teachers, then, in guiding children's independent reading must know something about them as individuals.

Mary has brought many of her own books for the first grade to share so her teacher knows that books have long been a part of her experience even before she came to school. A fourth-grade teacher in an overcrowded consolidated school is concerned because the school library was discontinued when more classrooms were needed, public libraries in this area are for adults only, and books in her children's homes are practically nonexistent. A sixth-grade teacher in a downtown urban school knows that almost half her class cannot read well enough to enjoy it; those who might read have no time or place to read at home where too many people live crowded into too little space.

All this information has a bearing on the way these teachers try to guide the independent reading of their children. Home conditions, reading skills, and availability of books all are significant factors in any independent reading program. But beyond these are other things which a teacher should know if she is to guide children realistically.

Since response is so closely related to individual experiences and personal emotions, and since "Most prejudices, loyalties, and preferences are determined by learning through identification with models" (4) a teacher, concerned with finding and using literature to which her children will respond and with which they will find identification easy, must do all she can to get other information about them. What are the

predominant values of the community? Who are the "heroic" figures for her children as a group and as individuals? Cronbach points out the inadequacies of the models, or identifying figures, that are presented to children in the teaching materials (textbooks) used in schools. These models, he says, do not demonstrate a sufficient variety of roles (too many leaders and heroes who succeed too spectacularly); they are involved in dramatic achievement and show "triumphs over crises the average man never meets" (4) and, finally, these models are unrealistic and emphasize very doubtful values.

The influence of the various forms of mass media on children's choices of identifying figures cannot be overlooked. DeBoer calls attention to the same limitation in connection with mass media:

From an educational point of view, perhaps the most significant shortcoming of the mass media with respect to children is their failure to deal honestly and seriously with real life problems. . . . The failure of the media in general to represent human beings and the realities of life with truth and accuracy presents a problem to the schools (5).

There are available many children's books that do show the everyday living of ordinary people concerned with garden-variety problems; there are also many tales of high adventure and delightful fantasy that invite those who read to forget for a time the troubles that plague them. But whether these stories have sufficient appeal to children in the light of their experiences

in living and in watching television, a teacher must find out by patient, experimental effort.

She must find out more about her children's television habits and interests. Comic books and the models they offer must not be ignored. For only by finding out what are the influences already operating in children's lives can she know where to start in an effort to change them.

A Teacher Must Know Some Ways of Bringing Children and Books Together

Expert knowledge about children and extensive knowledge about books must be brought together by the artist teacher if something is to happen in children. The following suggestions may help her put her knowledge to use in guiding children's independent reading. Most important of all, however, is her own enthusiasm, patience, and experimental attitude.

The teacher must select and provide many books and stories on the appropriate maturation and interest levels of her children—children seen always for this purpose as individuals. She must, at first, provide for the easiest kind of identification by matching age, sex, characters, and situations in books to individual children.

She must provide a relaxed classroom atmosphere in which differences of opinion are genuinely respected. No small part of this must be done through the example she sets by her own acceptance of children's ideas and opinions. Regardless of all else she does, a teacher should never underestimate the enduring value of the good feeling

that comes with sharing books and stories.

As a result of his work with adolescents, Loban (7) suggests some procedures that seem to be needed as early as elementary school experiences with reading. Because he found that adolescents tend to have rather limited insights regarding the underlying causes of behavior, he suggests that, very early, children be encouraged to ask not merely for "what happened", but for "why do you suppose it happened just that way?" He feels that all forms of dramatization—including role-playing—should be used in order to help children to identify in many ways with characters and situations. Other projective techniques—picture interpretation and unfinished stories—may serve in the same way. He urges that more attention be given to preparing children for reading by discussing incidents from their own experiences relevant to the material to be read.

In guiding children's independent reading, a teacher must keep her perspective, must see reading realistically, as only one of several formative influences on children today. Reading is, moreover, in competition with others of the mass media not only with respect to interest but also with respect to time available for enjoying it. This fact may mean that time for reading, and for talking it over, must be provided in every day's schedule in school; that effort be made to have children relate to books their experiences and interests in radio, television, and comics; that the teacher be alert to opportunities to relate books

to what children are seeing and hearing outside the classroom.

A Caution

The teacher who is bombarded with suggestions for guiding children's reading may, in her concern and enthusiasm, forget the essential nature of the materials she is using. It is important to realize that the best of children's books are, first and foremost, literature and should be treated as such. They are not prescribed for children because of the "lessons" they teach or the information they impart.

The best of children's fiction is written because the author has a good story to tell. It is emotional and creative as well as intellectual in origin, and its appeal must be first of all through the emotions of the reader. The essence of all artistic endeavor is this creation of an emotional oneness between the artist and the reader. All good literature does have a "message," but it emerges subtly and artistically integrated through the story. In using such literature with children the teacher dare not interrupt the process of communication between the artist and the child reader.

All who attempt to guide children's reading must exercise careful judgment with respect to how they use books with children. A teacher needs to summon up all her resources of professional judgment, common sense, and imagination in order to make children's independent reading a lively, thought-provoking, and, perhaps most of all, an enjoyable experience. Overzealous "guidance" might easily degenerate into stereotyped, didactic pro-

cedures that could spoil books and reading for children. Perhaps the only antidote for such a possibility is the cultivation of a "change of pace" point of view. Some books are meant to be enjoyed for their own sakes alone. Others make their points without any further discussion or elaboration of any kind. Still others may lead into searching discussions about problems of real concern to children. Sensitivity

to occasion and mood also must be considered in making decisions about what to do at any given point.

The three-year old turning the pages of a book . . . the six-year old cutting up the newspaper . . . the ten-year old combing the library shelves—these already independently reading children present a challenge that is deservedly awe-inspiring to the adult concerned with guiding children's reading.

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(Please Turn to Page 138.)

When Johnny Can Read—But!

by HELEN S. MCENTEE

● SCHOOL LIBRARY LABORATORY
TEACHERS COLLEGE,
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

THE MECHANICS of reading as a tool accomplishment is usually acquired at an early age in varying degrees of proficiency. It would indeed be Utopia if every teacher were satisfied with each pupil's reading achievements in degree of difficulty and in selection of material. Effective guidance gets bogged down in the theory and planning stage because materials are either not readily obtainable or because the individual teacher does not know where nor how to begin gathering materials to supplement daily assignments and at the same time nurture growth in the area of individual interests.

Samuel Johnson said:

A man ought to read as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good.

Curriculum demands may not permit such free lance reading but alert teachers will use a child's inclinations as a point of departure in the selection of materials providing a wide range of high interest materials with lower level reading difficulty.

In a world of many paces, and classes composed of children from diverse backgrounds, the task of choosing suitable materials becomes more complicated. Should materials acquired be only those which will augment the curriculum? Should there be some mate-

rials to foster hobbies, future careers, or "light reading" as fiction reading for entertainment is often labeled? In truth, no material should be thrown out of consideration. Reading growth and daily living are as inseparable as food and air are to bodily nutrition. Each individual has a personal reading pattern which can die on the vine, or be cultivated into a variety of worthwhile activities and interests.

Every teacher, regardless of the subject he teaches, has an obligation to help students acquire better reading skills and to broaden their reading range. Every teacher, therefore, must know the materials available and should assist in providing materials which permit each student to utilize these skills within his own unique reading pattern. The end results would be an ever broader reading range and a greater satisfaction and enjoyment to both teacher and student.

What materials will you use in broadening the horizons of boys and girls? Reading horizons stretch each time a child reads with enjoyment and satisfaction, and can find a relationship to what is read with the most immediate central interest of life. That interest may be cats, dogs, spaceships, snakes, hot-rods, romance, or "What am I going to be when I grow up?" And it may change tomorrow

and tomorrow and tomorrow, until you will bless the one who steers a steady course. This rapid change of interests begins in the early elementary-school years, accelerating through the early teens, and then begins to level off with more concentration in the latter teens. The aggravating point in the problem of providing reading materials comes when readers need high interest materials with low-level difficulty. This material is not solely used for the "slow" reader but is of inestimable value to the teacher seeking materials for the advanced reader but not wishing to overstep into areas of too great difficulty. Such materials are scattered and should be examined by the teacher with some experimental use with children having varying reading abilities so as to develop criteria for choosing or rejecting materials.

For the purpose of helping the teacher who has limited local resources or does not have a public or regional library easily accessible, some primary steps for the initial acquisition of materials are:

- List interests of each student, starring strong those to be provided for first.
- Canvass students to contribute all materials in their field of interest for general classroom sharing.
- Augment materials by daily news clippings from papers and magazines.
- Assign a weekly bulletin board, high-lighting one student's interest with contributions from all class members.

Much of the material used for bulletin boards can be sorted by subject and placed in a vertical file kept up-to-date. This becomes a class interest file and is of vital importance in that it becomes the nucleus for selecting more permanent materials in the form of books, magazines, records, and film strips.

Once the interest file is established, enthusiasm will rise to select permanent titles. Listed below are stimulating source starters. Some titles give extensive coverage and should be used first when seeking materials high in interest but low in difficulty. Compilers, librarians, and supervisors can suggest lists, but the teacher must make the final judgment as to which books to use in any individual situation. It is suggested, therefore, that notes be kept on the rapport established between reader and book and thus establish personal criteria patterns as to when and with whom certain materials can be used to best advantage. Individual teacher talents will affect the materials used. What works well with one teacher may be totally ineffective with another. Teachers, too, are constantly seeking inspiration and encouragement. Professional materials, marked "P" form a part of the materials listed. These materials are included to stimulate new approaches and to confirm already successful methods. These are helpful, while choosing materials for children, to reinforce, refresh or regenerate a youthful approach to both teaching and recreational materials.

The list follows:

Symbols: E-Elementary J-Junior High
S-Senior High P-Professional

- EJ Ahlers, Eleanor.
Children's Books; selected bibliographies and guides, 1955, 20 cents. School of Education, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.
- P Almy, Millie C.
Children's Experience Prior to First Grade and Success in Beginning Reading, 1949. Teachers College, Columbia University, New York 27, New York.
- P American Association of School Administrators.
Choosing Free Materials, 50 cents. National Education Association, 1201 16th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.
- EJS American Council on Education.
Reading Ladders from Human Relations, \$1.75. American Council on Education, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.
- EJSP Association for Childhood Education International.
Adventuring In Literature With Children, 12 leaflets on reading guidance, 75 cents. *A Bibliography of Books for Children*. To meet the needs of children of different ages; locales; purposes, and interest. Compiler, Leland B. Jacobs, 1952, \$1.00.
- EJSP Association for Childhood Education International.
This Is Reading, 1949, 75 cents. Association Childhood Education International, 1200 15th Street, N. W., Washington 5, D. C.
- EJP Belser, Danyln.
"Easy Books for the Intermediate Grades," *Elementary English Review* 17:235-39, 285-89, October, November, 1940.
- P Betts, Emmett A.
Foundations of Reading Instruction, With Emphasis On Differentiated Guidance, American Book Company, 1946.
- S Blair, G. M.
"One Hundred Books Most Enjoyed by Retarded Readers in Senior High School," *English Journal* 30:42-47, January, 1941. Composed of lists from 379 secondary schools.
- JS Carpenter, H. M.
Gateways to American History, H. W. Wilson, 1942. An annotated graded list for slow learners in Junior High School. H. W. Wilson, 950 University Avenue, New York 52, New York.
- P Children's Book Council.
The World of Children's Books. An inspiring book on the world of reading, children, and publishing. Children's Book Council, 50 West 53rd Street, New York 19, New York.
- EJSP Colby, Jean Poindexter.
Junior Reviewers. A comprehensive catalogue of 1500 most enjoyable books of the last 30 years. Grouped by ages, indexed, and annotated. Special classics section. Junior Reviewers, 241 Greenwood Street, Newton Center 59, Massachusetts.
- EJS Dunn, Anita E.
Fare for the Reluctant Reader. Teachers College, State University of New York, Albany, New York, 1952. An especially fine foreword on reading by Dr. J. Roy Newton, Director of Reading Center. Broad subject headings, grades, and is annotated.
- EJS Ersted, Ruth, comp.
School Library Materials. Department of Education, State of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
- P Gans, Roma.
Reading Is Fun, 1950. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York 27, New York.
- P Grambs, Jean D.
Development of Lifetime Reading Habits, 1955. R. R. Bowker Company, 50 cents. 62 West 45th Street, New York 36, New York.
- P Henner, Frances.
Youth, Communication and Libraries. American Library Association, 1949. Stimulating reading for educators and librarians; divided into three areas: "Youth and Communication of Ideas," "Materials of Communication for Youth," "Libraries for Youth As Agencies of Communication." American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois.
- EJS Herminghaus, Earl G.
Help From Books: Bibliotherapy In the Elementary School. Contains: 1. Literature and the formation of personality, 2. Index of problem situations and behavior deviations, 3. Annotated bibliography. Publishers: St. Louis Public School Journal, Vol. 6, No. 1, November 1952. Division of Special Services,

- Board of Education, St. Louis, Missouri.
- JS Jewett, Arno.
Aids for Knowing Books for Teenagers. Brief description of book lists and periodicals. Books listed suitable for high school teachers, librarians, curriculum workers, and students. U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Washington 25, D. C.
- EJS Kircher, Clara J.
Recreational Books for Retarded Readers. School Libraries Division, Public Library, Newark, New Jersey, 1951.
- EJSP Junior Libraries.
Junior Libraries. 62 West 45th Street, New York 36, New York. Reviews contain full information on scope, background, age or grade level. One of the best current appraisal lists. Professional articles, records, films, and other media.
- EJSP Massingill, Alberta.
Remedial Reading and the Public Library. H. W. Wilson Bulletin, June 1954, 950 University Avenue, New York 52, New York. A particularly fine article and bibliography giving reading difficulty.
- EJS Matson, Charlotte.
Books for Tired Eyes; a list of books in large print. No book listed under 14-point type. Includes adult, juvenile, publisher, price, and grade level. American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois.
- S Mississippi Department of Education.
A Suggested List of Books for Mississippi High School Libraries, 1955. An excellent current selection on which to pattern collections. School Library Supervisor, Division of Instruction, Department of Education, Jackson, Mississippi.
- P Monroe, Marion.
Growing Into Reading; how readiness for reading develops at home and at school, 1951. Scott, Foresman and Company, 433 E. Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois.
- JS New York Public Library.
Books for the Teenage. Arranged by subject, title, author, publisher, and is annotated. Valuable for new books not appearing on other lists. \$1.00 per year.
- Easy Reading for Adults,* 1954. Books range from picture books, readers, very easy, easy, fairly easy, standard, fairly difficult, information, and reference. Excellent indexes to sections for foreign born, illiterate, native-born. with subject, authors, title, and is annotated. New York Public Library, 5th Avenue and 42nd Street, New York 18, New York.
- EJ O'Melia, Pauline.
Books for the Slow-Learning Child. Books for children who have not learned to read; those who can follow simple stories; those with 4th grade reading ability. 16th District Public Schools, Elmont, New York., 1946.
- EJ Richards, Margaret.
"Books for Retarded Readers." *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 14:642-45, May 1940, H. W. Wilson, 950 University Avenue, New York 52, New York. Simple text with mature interest level appeal. General grade ability 6-9.
- EJ Rue, Eloise, comp.
Subject Index to Books for Intermediate Grades, 1950. Index for Primary Grades, 1943. American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois.
- EP Russell, David H.
Reading Aids Through the Grades, 1951. Columbia University, Teachers College, New York 27, New York.
- EJS Slater, Russell.
Books for Youth Who Dislike Reading, 1941. Ohio Conference on Reading Bulletin No. 2. Ohio State University Press, Columbus, Ohio. (1) Books enjoyed by retarded readers in upper elementary and early junior high school, (2) Junior high and early senior high school groups, (3) Publishers, (4) Books for poor readers.
- EJSP Spache, George.
Good Books for Poor Readers. An extensive listing of popular materials by subject, adapted materials, textual materials and other devices. Books on personal problems. Appendix of graded books for boys and girls. Author, title, content indexes. Publishers addresses. One for first purchase. Reading Laboratory, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, \$1.00.

- JS Strang, Ruth.
Gateways to Readable Books.
 H. W. Wilson, 950 University Avenue, New York 52, New York. Wide coverage of many fields. Annotated and graded.

- EJ Sullivan, Helen.
Selected List of Books for Remedial Reading. Material of interest where grade vocabulary is lacking, 1948. Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.

- JS West, Dorothy H., ed.
Standard Catalog for High School Libraries, Children's Catalog; with supplements, subscription basis. H. W. Wilson, 950 University Avenue, New York 52, New York.

- EJS Wurtz, Conrad.
A Bibliography of Reading Lists for Retarded Readers, Bulletin 640, 1949. State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

To serve as an appetizer, a second list follows, from which further exploration may be pursued. These are only starter titles and do not include the vast quantity of materials available.

Grades 1-3

BOYS

- R.L. Reading Level I.L. Interest Level
 R.L. Reading Level I.L. Interest Level
 Anderson—*Billy and Blaze*
 R.L. 3, I.L., 6-8.
 Henderson—*Why Cowboys Sing in Texas*
 R.L. 3, I.L. 3 up.
 Meader—*Red Horse Hill*, 1930
 R.L. 5-6, I.L. 7-9.
 Tousey—*Steamboat Billy*
 R.L. 3-4, I.L. 7-9.

GIRLS

- Dalgleish—*The Smiths and Rusty*
 R.L. 3-4, I.L. 7-9.
 Orton—*Treasure in the Little Trunk*
 R.L. 3-4, I.L. 7-9.
 Reely—*Seatmates*
 R.L. 3-4, I.L. 5-6.
 Robinson—*Little Lucia and Her Puppy*
 R.L. 3, I.L. 7-9.

Grades 4-6

BOYS

- Bowman—*Pecos Bill*
 R.L. 5-6, I.L. 8-10.
 Meader—*Will to Win*
 R.L. 5, I.L. 9-10.
 Tunis—*All American*
 R.L. 6, I.L. High School.
 Wilder—*Farmer Boy*
 R.L. 5, I.L. 7-9.

GIRLS

- Alcott—*Little Women*
 R.L. 5-6, I.L. 9-12.
 Boylston—*Sue Barton, Student Nurse*
 R.L. 5-6, I.L. 9-12.
 Jackson—*Ramona*
 R.L. 11-12, I.L. 9-12.
 Porter—*Freckles*
 R.L. 5, I.L. 9-12.

Grades 7-9

BOYS

- Booth—*Book of Modern War Planes*
 R.L. 7-8, I.L. 9-12.
 Petersham—*Story Book of Aircraft*
 R.L. 4, I.L. 8-10.
 Sperry—*All Sails Set*
 R.L. 4, I.L. 8-10.
 White—*Daniel Boone, Wilderness Scout*
 R.L. 7-8, I.L. 9-12.

GIRLS

- Aldrich—*A Lantern in Her Hand*
 R.L. 7, I.L. 9-12.
 Brink—*Mademoiselle Misfortune*
 R.L. 7-9, I.L. 8-10.
 Montgomery—*Anne of Green Gables*
 R.L. 7, I.L. 9-12.
 Singmaster—*You Make Your Own Luck*
 R.L. 7, I.L. 9-12.

Resource Centers

Book Week Materials:

- Children's Book Council
 50 W. 53rd Street, New York City 19, New York.
 Library Products, Inc.
 Box 552, Sturgis, Michigan.

Filmstrips:

- Educational Services,
 1730 Eye Street, N. W., Washington, 6, D. C.
 Encyclopedia Britannica Films,
 1150 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois.
 Ideal Pictures Corporation,
 58 E. South Water Street, Chicago 1, Illinois.
 Life Filmstrips,
 Time and Life Building,
 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, New York.
 McGraw-Hill Book Company,
 Text Film Department,
 330 W. 42nd Street, New York 36, New York.
 Photo-Graphix
 7807 W. Acres Drive, Concorn, Tennessee.

Films:

- British Information Service,
 30 E. 60th Street, New York 20, New York.

Coronet Instructional Films,
65 E. South Water Street, Chicago,
Illinois.

Educational Services,
1730 Eye Street, N. W., Washington 6,
D. C.

Films of the Nations
62 W. 45th Street, New York 36, New
York.

Princeton Film Center, Inc.
Princeton, New Jersey.

Magazines:

Bay State Periodical Service,
18 Tremont Street, Boston 8, Massachu-
setts.

F. W. Faxon, 83 Francis Street, Boston
15, Massachusetts.

McGregor Magazine Agency,
Mount Morris, Illinois.

National Publications Company,
1151 S. Broadway, Los Angeles 15, Cali-
fornia.

Records:

Sam Goody, 235 W. 49th Street, New
York 19, New York.

RCA Victor Records, 630 5th Avenue,
New York 20, New York.

Teaching is an "electric" profession. Sparks fly out and many are the chained reactions. The teacher is the central power station. Teaching media act as transformers to carry the generating forces of knowledge to students at rates varying to suit each one's special equipment. Whether slow or fast, everyone has a certain mental voltage at which one operates best. Overloaded equipment breaks down. Underfed equipment operates inefficiently. Your choice of materials may mean to some child a life of light or a life of darkness in the intellectual world. With a little careful screening, it is hoped that the materials of this article will serve as power lines to light up the world in which you teach.

Evaluating Children's Awareness of Literature

by SHELTON L. ROOT, JR.

● QUEENS COLLEGE, NEW YORK

ALL OF US who work with children and books wish, at one time or another, that we had better methods of discovering whether or not young people are growing in their awareness of the untold riches which lie between the covers of children's books.

Most of us do something about this problem. Some keep lists of books read. Some require oral or written book reports—or both. Others give standardized tests, tests which devote a part of their limited space to measuring children's knowledge of particular books. Still others combine one or more of the aforementioned tech-

niques with some more original plan of their own. But few of us are satisfied that we have really done enough to evaluate the quality of children's experiences in reading.

Perhaps, if we consider the implications of three questions before we next undertake to evaluate children's growth in literature, we might find that we could do a more satisfactory job.

First, what do we really set out to do when we evaluate?

Let's examine this term, *evaluation*. Evaluation means a great deal more than simple measurement. To really

evaluate anything we must do more than merely lay it alongside a single, preconceived, and generally agreed upon measuring device. True, a part of evaluation is measurement. But undoubtedly a larger part of our evaluation cannot be made with precise, objective measuring devices.

Evaluation means more than measurement! It means: "The process of determining the extent to which values are achieved, purposes carried out, and goals reached . . . Evaluation includes analysis of the purposes themselves and consideration of the techniques by which goals are attained, as well as the degree of achievement."¹ If these are the things with which we are really concerned when we evaluate children's experiences with literature, we had better consider just what kinds of values, purposes, and goals can intelligently be expected when children familiarize themselves with books. And, this leads us into a consideration of our next question.

Second, what aspects of children's experiences with literature should be evaluated?

One method of determining this is to answer the question: What should experiences with literature do for children? Some of the more obvious answers are:

- It should help children better to understand the world in which they live.
- It should help children better to understand themselves.

¹James B. Burr, Lowry W. Harding, and Leland B. Jacobs, *Student Teaching in the Elementary School* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1960), p. 183.

- It should help children better to understand others.
- It should help children to increase the effectiveness of their interpersonal relationships.
- It should help children to recognize the inherent worth and dignity of all peoples.
- It should help provide children with a healthy means of temporarily disassociating themselves from the almost incessant demands of modern, day-to-day living.
- It should help children gain a better understanding of how "things" came to be.
- It should help children establish a sense of direction toward the promise of a better world. (A promise whose fulfillment is dependent upon the sense of direction which young readers gain as they reach maturity.)
- It should help children become increasingly discriminating in the selection of their reading materials.

Of course, there are other objectives which should be added. But this listing provides us with some fairly satisfactory leads.

Third, how satisfactory are our present techniques of evaluation, and what, if anything, can we do to improve them?

Most of us have been giving standardized tests for a great many years, and they have been of some help to us in some areas. But of how much actual help can they be in the area of literature. What do they really test?

An examination of the literature part of one such test, which we often administer, and which is accepted by nearly all authorities in the field of testing to be as good as, if not better than, any other instrument available, reveals that it measures children's memory. Memory of (and this test is designed for children in grades five through eight) nursery rhymes, fairy tales, adult poetry, patriotic songs, children's classics (most of which were originally written for adult consumption), *Bible* stories, an opera, American folk lore, and a knowledge of early American and European history.

These tests demand nothing more of the testee than a good memory—which is all they are designed to measure. To score high on such a test a child is really wasting his time to read anything with a publication date much later than 1920. Actually, other than Joyce Kilmer's, *Trees*, the latest date of publication for information demanded by this particular test is that of *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, which was published at the turn of the twentieth century!

More careful scrutiny of standardized tests of this type would lead only to the already obvious conclusion that, insofar as children's literature is concerned, these tests are of minute and questionable value. We might deduce that if a child scores unusually high on such a test he may not have been employing his reading time to the most rewarding advantage.

If, in the light of critical examination, the time hallowed practice of evaluating children's literary experiences by standardized tests is to be

abandoned, what kinds of evaluative practices might replace them?

From some quarters comes the immediate answer, "None! Give children plenty of time to read and don't worry about evaluation." This ready solution is built upon what appears to be, at very least, some misguided, if well intentioned, concepts of what the early leaders of the progressive education movement were aiming at when they leveled their philosophic cannons at the highly formalized, impersonal, and unsatisfactory evaluative techniques of the past. Nowhere, among the responsible leaders of the progressive education movement, can we find one who advocates the elimination of evaluation. In fact, they were advocates of more evaluation, not less! Their concern lay with the quality of evaluation and with the problem of what was to be evaluated.

A Broad Concept of Evaluation

Most of us agree, at least in principle, that education without evaluation is neither practical, desirable, nor possible. And we also agree that an important part of children's educative experience is an increasing awareness of the rapidly growing potentiality of literature. So, the answer is not to be found in the abandonment of evaluation. The answer is to be found in the acceptance of a broader concept of the term *evaluation*, and in the implementation of better evaluative techniques.

We must first determine the variety of reading experiences which children are having. Is there a balance between classic and contemporary, between factual and fictional, between national

and international, between cultural and intercultural, and between prose and poetry? This determination is simply a matter of record keeping. The children, themselves, can do much of it with the help of their teacher or librarian.

Using these records, once we have them, to their best advantage is somewhat more difficult. Prerequisite to satisfactory use is, as with other aspects of the literature program, the provision of ample time. Then, under the guidance of teachers, there should be developed an increasing understanding of the advantages of becoming a well-balanced reader. This kind of balance is determined on an individual basis, however, and not on any such basis as an assigned ratio, such as two fictional to one factual, and three national to two international, etc., for all members of the group. An evaluation, such as this, of what has been read should help each reader to discover the gaps in his own reading, and, under the expert guidance of his teacher and librarian, should help him close such gaps.

Criteria of Evaluation Should Be Evolved Also by the Group

This very consideration is in itself, perhaps, the keystone of all effective programs of evaluation. During such considerations teachers not only help children to determine the types of books which they have been reading, but, with a slight shift in emphasis, help children to establish criteria by which to judge the quality of their literature. For, as in the evaluation of other aspects of school experience,

children profit most when the criteria for evaluation are evolved by the group. Little insightful evaluation results from the utilization of autocratically imposed standards to democratically appraise one's own growth.

From group establishment of criteria very naturally grows the establishment by individuals of their own criteria. These criteria take into account individual differences in interest, reading background, and reading ability. They do not negate the criteria previously established by the group. They are outgrowths of them, tailored to fit the uniqueness of each individual reader.

Once established, these criteria, both individual and group, must be given a chance to operate and be modified in the light of experience. Time must be provided for periodic assessments by children of the quality of their reading experience and the effectiveness of their criteria. Here, again, records should be kept, both by the teacher and by the children. By keeping simple records of the modifications through which their criteria go, children will be able to more completely evaluate their own growth. And teachers at year's end will be helped in visualizing the effects of their own patient guidance.

Group Discussions Are Helpful

Group discussion of particular books or specific types of books is another invaluable aid to effective evaluation. Here, discussion goes below plot level whenever appropriate. Questions are asked such as: What was the author really trying to say? Are the peo-

ple described by the author true to life, or do they lack blood and sinew? How can we reconcile the different points of view expressed by these two authors? These questions are answered as well as possible by further reading, by other members of the class, by the school librarian, and by the teacher. Questions whose answers lie not in fact but in point of view are examined and plainly labelled as being outside the realm of empirical testing. Children are not browbeaten into the acceptance of popular answers to such questions. In matters of this nature, deviation is encouraged.

Evaluation also comes from observation — observation by the teacher of the way children interpret, through dramatic media, what they have read. Children frequently draw upon their literary ventures to provide plots and characters for dramatic play and informal dramatics. Though the teacher cannot and should not attempt to guide dramatic play, she can and should learn much from its observation. Here children re-create the scenes and characters they have read about, or been read to about. And it is here, by observation, that teachers can determine what children "make" of their reading.

Among older children, informal dramatics serve much the same purpose. But, in addition to being an observer, the teacher can be one of the interpreters. For, as children and teacher work together to re-enact a situation or scene taken from their reading, some communality of understanding is required. In reaching such

communality of understanding, it is the teacher's responsibility to help children see deeper and deeper beneath the surface of plot.

Children of upper elementary school age and beyond have much to gain through written and oral evaluations of the books which they have read. Evaluations, such as these, are not to be confused with the dull, uninspired, halting retelling of plot. This procedure of retelling the plot invariably results in the listening audience being bored beyond the point of discomfort, or the reading audience (most often of one — the teacher) making a note that here is another assignment completed. It takes greater artistry than most children have, or most adults for that matter, to narrate an improved version of an author's original.

Critical Analysis Should Be Used

There is however, a definite place for critical evaluations in which children, either orally or in writing, analyze the method of presentation, the effectiveness of presentation, the point of view of the presentation, and the intentions which the author had when he wrote. It is this type of critical analysis which encourages young readers to compare and contrast their own assumptions about life with those of many authors from many places and out of many times. From such comparisons and contrastings comes an ever increasing ability to evaluate one's own experiences with literature. And out of such endeavors come readers with an ever increasing sense of discrimination. Evaluations of this na-

ture, also demand the help of the teacher.

Certainly, a critical evaluation should not be required for every book read, probably not even for every second or third book read. But when they are made they should be made with the help of the teacher whose responsibility it is to encourage the evaluator to keep before him the criteria by which he is evaluating. It is, too, the teacher's job to see that such evaluations find the audience which they deserve. This can be done by posting the evaluations as they are made, or by keeping them in a card file in the library corner to be used by others as they select books, or by keeping them in a loose-leaf folder for the same purpose. If the school is a large one, many of these evaluations can be posted in the library. It takes an audience to encourage most writers. Oral evaluations should be informal and infrequent enough to help make of the occasion one which is looked forward to with eager enthusiasm rather than with sickening fear. With evaluation, as with reading, the greatest growth comes when a sense of excitement prevails.

To these evaluative techniques, others can and should be added by teachers who know intimately their own classroom situations. If it appears that more space has been devoted to the problem of helping children evaluate their own growth in reading than to the problem of helping teachers evaluate the growth of children in reading, this is probably as it should be. For our task of evaluating becomes many

times easier and more effective as our children become more astute in the art of evaluating their own progress.

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Summer Reading Workshop At University of Chicago

The Fourth Annual Workshop in Reading will be held at the University of Chicago from July 2 through 27, 1956. It is designed for classroom teachers, supervisors, administrators, librarians, instructors in teacher-training institutions, and remedial-reading teachers.

The topics considered will be based on the problems listed by each participant. In addition to discussions, there will be demonstrations, guided reading, reports of projects, and observation in the Laboratory School and Reading Clinic.

The Workshop staff includes: Helen Huus, James M. McCallister, Mildred Letton, William S. Gray, and Helen M. Robinson. Further information and application blanks for admission to the Workshop may be secured from Mrs. Robinson.

. . .

"News of Local Councils" Is Postponed

Because of certain limitations the editor was forced to delay the printing of the news of local councils. The column will appear in the April issue of the magazine. Continue to send a review of the activities of your council to the editor of the column, Josephine Tronsberg, Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, so that new items may be added to the news which was to be published in this issue.

A Cooperative Adventure

by MATE GRAYE HUNT

● WESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE
KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

A READING SLOGAN is abroad in the land which says, "The right book for the right child at the right time." This is an equilateral triangle, which when properly broken down covers the whole field of books and readers. "The right book" implies a vast, selective, evaluative knowledge of books for all ages ranging from the old classics to the avalanches now pouring from the press. "The right child" requires as thorough knowledge of the individual as possible. "At the right time" indicates that whims, moods, maturity, states of emotional balance and other factors enter into the choice of reading materials.

In this paper, I shall not be concerned with clinical cases where physical difficulties or emotional disturbances need skillful, technical diagnosis and treatment. Rather I shall stay more safely within my own field which is that of a teacher of teachers and librarians. Children's books and other reading materials are my favorite courses because I believe in the dynamic power of books. Also I agree with Emerson that the reading of a book has often been the making of a man. This great working, potent influence in lives should be made a part of the daily life of the toddler in the home through the examples of the older members of the family, especially the mother and father. Reading aloud in the home, ownership of a few

books suitable for small hands, kept on an open shelf in easy access are vital factors in encouraging the handling, the care of, the "long-looking-at" and finally the reading of books. What part can a teacher, or librarian have in this family affair? I'd urge mothers and fathers to read and be inspired by the delightful *Bequest of Wings* by Annis Duff. The sub-title, "A family's pleasure with books," gives the theme—the true account of how the young Duff parents introduced books, pictures, music, etc., to their two children.

Storytelling in the home and school, with the book in evidence from which the story is taken, is a splendid introduction to books. Recordings are good too but not so good as the personal touch of the story-teller. *The Way of the Storyteller* by Ruth Sawyer is a treasure-house for the beginner or veteran in this art, as old as the ages and an effective way of teaching while entertaining.

The American Library Association in Chicago and large libraries over the country issue helpful, inexpensive lists and aids in the selection of "the right book." These aids are reliable because they have been compiled by experienced, trained people who are dealing everyday with their stock in trade: books and children. Other organizations publish helps in this field for the busy teacher from the kindergarten

to Senior High School. Many of these sources are listed elsewhere in this volume.

Critical reviews in periodicals are also helpful, such as those in *Childhood Activities*, *Booklist*, *Elementary English*, and others. Few teachers have the time or training to "winnow the wheat from the chaff" and therefore must rely on recognized authorities in the field as a fair second best aid in selection. A publisher's catalog or the blurb on the book jacket is not a selective aid because he has the book to sell and will not call attention to its defects.

A yardstick of measurement by an anonymous writer reads: "Here is a booke made after mine own heart, good print, good tale, good pictures and good sense, good learning and good labour of old days."

Many years ago Emilie Poulsson wrote a four-line stanza that is all-inclusive. I shall use the lines in reverse order as section headings.

Books are friends, come, let us read. (Companionship)

Many boys and girls prefer fiction books for companionship—so do boys and girls grown tall, even bald or gray. There is no objection to their choice as long as an effort toward a "balanced diet" in reading materials is recognized. Scientific investigations and experiments with controlled groups have done much to establish a norm of measurement to be applied to the format of a book. The color, material, durability of the cover; the color and texture of the paper; the legibility of type; the leading; the number, kind,

media of the pictures, all these features attract or repel the potential reader who is yet unsteady on his "reading legs."

The contents is yet another more subtle matter. The normal reader, of course, is no especial problem, though he should have some guidance so that he may have enrichment and worthy vicarious experiences. His mind should be stretched, his horizon widened, his interests enlarged, and his humor strengthened and refined.

The *slow, retarded, or reluctant* reader, for whatever cause or reason, usually receives a lion's share of the teacher's attention. I sometimes think this shows a poor sense of values.

Writers and publishers are turning more thought and effort toward the production of reading materials of high content interest but low vocabulary difficulties. Some libraries have a specially trained librarian who works part-time with a reading clinic and part-time in the library as a "reader's guide" for slow readers. Grand Rapids, Michigan, maintains such a service for the readers themselves, for parents, and teachers. There are good lists to be had and helpful books. *Gateway to Readable Books* by Ruth Strang is one such a book.

The accelerated or advanced reader is probably the most neglected of all readers. I've heard the remark: "O, yes, he reads everything. I don't have to bother with him." In that attitude and the resulting action lies a great loss in leadership and again a serious distortion in a sense of values.

This reader—dynamite for good or evil—needs guidance far beyond the

others. Is he sufficiently emotionally mature, socially adjusted, background stable enough to keep his balance when reading materials beyond his age? What a challenge! What an opportunity! What a danger!

Books are paths that upward lead. (Inspiration)

In this realm are the books that put iron in our blood, stiffness in our spine and faith in God and our fellow man in our hearts. The last decade or so has seen attractive, authentic biographies done for young readers by such author-artists as the d'Aulaires, the Lynn Wards, Clare Ingam Judson, etc., etc. They are beautiful books as readable as any fiction, not dry-as-dust chronologies from birth to death as many biographies in days gone by. Such books should be available to boys and girls at all times.

Poetry comes under this second category of (inspiration) books. Somehow we have permitted the youth of our land to grow up (physically at least) with a dislike for poetry and the idea that it is "sissy" to like poetry. I wonder if requiring the memorization of poetry as punishment "after school" has had any influence along that line. Yes, no doubt. Also as I find in my classes, teachers do not know poetry or where to get suitable poems. There are so many lovely books of poetry—even 25¢ ones! Do have them all over the room. In the middle of a class pick up a book and read a poem—put the book down—go on with your teaching—don't impose your interpretation on your (young or old) listeners. They might have one better than yours.

... the palms of your hands will thicken,

The skin on your cheek will tan ...

But you'll walk like a man!

Certainly the numerous books of and about the Bible are inspirational. The great poetry of Job, Psalms, etc. etc. Christmas with its appeal to young and the not so young is an annual opportunity to expose the children to the rich beauty and reverence of the old masters rather than snow scenes, squirrels, and little fawns. What is the meaning of Christmas any way? Within the last five years my personal collection of Christmas books has badly taxed my shelf space. Perhaps my favorite new one last Christmas was Jesse Stewart's *The Beatenest Boy*, Stewart's first attempt at a child's book. A splendid story for a young boy. More power to Stewart!

Duff (mentioned above) has a fine chapter on Christmas, pictures to enrich and where to get them.

Books are gates to Lands of Pleasure. (Recreation)

Reading should be fun. Of all the kinds of recreational reading perhaps that about one's hobby is most rewarding. Often a teacher or librarian may "reach" a non-reader through his hobby. If a child (big or little, seven or seventy) doesn't have a hobby he should be encouraged to acquire and cultivate one. A hobby is a means of achievement—one of the basic needs. There are books and more books about hobbies. Pets may be an interesting hobby. Books on their care are recreational as well as informational.

Frequently a hobby becomes an avocation or even a vocation. Great possibilities are here.

Books are keys to wisdom's treasure. (Information)

In an elementary school library in Cleveland, Ohio, I saw a second-grade girl and boy doing "research" and taking notes to make a report to their class—she on castles and he on cabins.

Man's search for information to add to his general store of knowledge begins soon after birth and should continue to death. Curiosity is the stimulating influence in this eternal search.

Joseph Henry, first director of the Smithsonian Institution, scrawled on the fly-leaf of a book:

This book exerted a remarkable influence upon my life. It opened to me a new world when I was sixteen, and caused me to resolve, at the time of reading it, that I would immediately commence to devote my life to the acquisition of knowledge.

The wealth of books on science that have been broken down to the child's range is a gratifying trend. Books of history and travel, of places and people, of customs and manners, of foods and fun, of sports and games—everything under the sun, are to be found well-done and attractively so in books for all ages.

How to find these books is a challenge in cooperation between the teacher and the librarian. The special training of each in materials and tech-

niques makes them complementary to each other in service to the learning child. Together they may more successfully furnish books of information, recreation, inspiration, and companionship "at the right time," remembering also that

*A Book is a pony with magic feet,
Bearing its rider on high adventures.*

. . .

**University of Pittsburgh
Announces Reading Course
and Conference**

The University of Pittsburgh's Twelfth Annual Conference and Course on Reading will be held from June 18 to June 29, 1956. The theme for the Conference, "Controversial Issues in Reading," was selected by those who attended the Eleventh Conference. Visiting lecturers who are experts in their particular field will add to the offerings of staff members of the University and invited local speakers.

The Conference is offered during the regular pre-two weeks summer session and affords an opportunity for students to earn two semester hours credit by registering for Elementary Education SS 175 or Secondary Education SS 210. Visitors may attend any or all sessions as guests of the University.

For further information write to the Director, Summer Session, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh 13, Pennsylvania, or to the Director, Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh.

Remedial Reading with Cardiac Children

by MARGERY R. BERNSTEIN
● MAMARONECK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK

MANY POOR READERS are to be found among children who have been cardiac or rheumatic fever patients. The writer had the privilege of doing remedial reading work during 1954 and 1955 with fourteen boys and eleven girls who had a history of cardiac disorders. Two of the youngsters had congenital heart defects; the balance had had one or more attacks of rheumatic fever followed by varying degrees of heart damage and consequent restriction of activity. It is the purpose of this article to describe the group of children and the kind of work that was done with them, to make observations concerning their particular reading problems and to draw conclusions as to the best ways of working with them.

Experiment Conducted at a Social Agency

The reading work was conducted within the framework of a social agency in a large Eastern city. The boys and girls all attended public schools and traveled to the agency after school hours. They were from fourteen to sixteen years of age at the beginning of the program. One boy was in the seventh grade, two were in the tenth grade, while the others were in either the eighth or ninth grades. Each pupil was scheduled to have a one-hour session with the worker once a week; absences, primarily due to ill-

ness, and vacations brought the average number of interviews per pupil down to fourteen during the entire school year.

Even aside from their history as cardiac patients, the twenty-five boys and girls did not represent a typical group of teen-agers. The vast majority came from economically deprived homes; in many the language spoken at home was not English. The mean intelligence quotient of the group as measured by the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children was 90; the range was from 69 to 111.

Although all of the group had been referred for help in reading, there was considerable variability both as to their initial reading ability and the degree of retardation involved. The initial scores on the *Gates Reading Survey*, Form II, showed reading ability from second- to seventh-grade level. By using an estimate of reading capacity based in large part on their intelligence level, it was possible to approximate the degree of retardation in reading ability. The boys and girls in this group were found to be retarded by from one to six years in reading ability, with an average retardation of about three years.

Remedial Work Conducted On Tutorial Basis

The reading work was conducted on a tutorial basis. At first each pupil was

seen individually. Later small groups were often formed, largely on the basis of convenience in arranging schedules. During the course of the first few interviews a diagnosis as to the nature of the reading difficulty was made and plans were outlined for the work with each child. The work was continued until the end of the school year at which time a re-test (*Gates Reading Survey*, Form I) was given and an evaluation made of each pupil's progress.

The methods used were essentially those of any remedial program. Specific reading skills were taught and practiced. Easy interesting material was provided; a special effort was made to find books and articles suitable for adolescent readers, books easy enough for these children to take home to read. Help was given in any academic area in which the pupil felt that he needed assistance, not only in the allied fields of writing and spelling but also in other subject matter areas. A typewritten newspaper was published irregularly to provide for the sharing of the articles the children had written. Throughout the year time was taken to discuss any problems which concerned the children and especially to give them an opportunity to explore their feelings about their reading and school problems.

During the first interview, the pupil was asked to talk about the reading problem as he saw it and to tell about his reading history. There was typically a history of missing school during the early years of elementary school and of being placed in special classes where little formal teaching was under-

taken. In many cases poor reading had only recently been recognized as a problem in view of its effect on plans for continued education and for choosing a vocation. There was little of the history of high standards of achievement set by parents and of nagging that is so often found among cases of reading disability. Health had been the primary concern of these children and their parents with education playing a role of secondary importance.

Cases Had a Common Background of Experiences

The members of the group had in common a restricted background of experience which was the indirect result of their illness. Sickness had resulted in their having spent months or even years in bed, in convalescent homes and in hospitals. Even after convalescence, many of them had not been permitted the freedom to explore their environment which most children enjoy. Thus their opportunity to learn about the world around them had been severely limited. One of these teenagers not only could not read the word "fire-fly" but had never seen one. Another was stumped by the word "bark"; she had never felt the rough bark of a tree with her own hands.

The gaps in their education had left corresponding gaps in their background of common knowledge. One child had practically no idea of the divisions of time and could only guess that a month was "bigger than" a week. Most had only the haziest notions of geography so that the use of maps and a small globe became an

essential step in preparing for reading comprehension.

All Were Fearful of Reading

Another common characteristic of the children was their fearfulness in the reading situation. Some were afraid to read aloud; some showed outward signs of tension when asked to do any reading at all; there were several who were afraid to look into unfamiliar materials. As one girl later explained it, "Mother wouldn't like her to be reading about love and all that silly stuff." It is true that many healthy children with reading difficulties are fearful and tense about their reading, but the writer feels that it is correct to say that among the cardiac children the fears were more intense. They were also more difficult to handle through counseling methods. The worker felt that in many cases the fears in the reading situation were closely related to general fearfulness about health matters; since it was the policy of the agency for non-medical personnel to avoid speaking of health matters with the clients, the worker did not feel free to carry the discussion into the area of the pupil's fears. A similar difficulty might well be encountered in any school situation with handicapped children.

The case of Arthur is described below as an illustration of the fearfulness encountered.

Arthur was one of the most intelligent youngsters in the group. He had had rheumatic fever and been away from school during the second and third grades. His family had moved so that when he returned to school in

the fourth grade it was to a new school. According to Arthur, his teacher just assumed that he could read and Arthur was too eager to do well in school to disillusion her. For the next two years Arthur struggled to keep his inability to read a secret. A second long period of illness resulted in his having a home teacher; it was she who had started to teach Arthur to read when he was eleven years old.

When the writer first saw him he was able to read second-grade material with difficulty. His speech was tense and his face contorted when he spoke. When asked to read a short paragraph aloud, he fidgeted with his right hand in his left pocket over his heart and fairly boomed out the words in a tight, staccato voice. Reading aloud was immediately discontinued and Arthur never again read orally for the worker. When silent reading was started a new difficulty was encountered. Arthur would nod or shake his head in answer to specific questions, but could not give any kind of free summary of the material read, although he assured the worker that he had understood the text. Arthur was interested in the lives of great explorers and knew a good deal about them. The worker used a book about explorations with Arthur and then asked him to dictate a story about them. He dictated in a painfully slow fashion, but the worker merely waited without looking up from her writing. He eventually put together a few sentences giving some factual matter on one of the explorers and later dictated another short paragraph on another one. His summaries were later typed and shown to Arthur who ex-

pressed great enthusiasm at having been able to express himself in writing in this fashion. In the course of the year's work, Arthur learned to dictate more freely and several of his stories were used in the group newspaper. Toward the end of the school year he wrote a story on his own with a happy disregard for his inability to spell. He also learned to talk freely about the books he read.

Arthur's fearfulness in relation to reading itself was handled at the beginning by providing him with a first-grade reader about helicopters. He was told that it was quite easy, but that reading such easy material would help him learn to read more fluently. In the course of the year he borrowed and read a total of twelve books of which the last was of about seventh-grade difficulty. Arthur was at the beginning completely unable to "unlock" unfamiliar words by using a phonic approach. By the end of the year, little progress had been made along these lines, but Arthur had learned to use his good intelligence to derive meanings from the context and was able to use simple phonic clues to check his guesses. He was sufficiently confident in his ability to try to read the sports sections of the daily newspapers.

The worker handled Arthur's concrete reading problems in a way designed to use his capabilities and to avoid methods which apparently aroused his fears and caused him to

block. The difficulty in self-expression, however, was so great that it was necessary to handle it directly before any other work could be carried on successfully; it would have been impossible to develop a good relationship with Arthur if he had not learned to communicate with the worker. His fears were interpreted only on the level of his fear of being found out as a non-reader; he was assured that he could and would learn to read. His interest in explorations was recognized and valued highly and used in the first attempts to express himself verbally.

Two Common Factors Found In All Cardiac Cases

In working with children with a history of cardiac illness, the writer found two main factors which complicated the task of teaching them to read better: their limited background of experience and their fearfulness. In the reading situation special efforts were made to fill in the gaps in these children's backgrounds by appropriate teaching methods. Fears were handled and tensions dealt with as they occurred in the reading situation. It is important for teachers of children with a history of cardiac disease or rheumatic fever to recognize these and other difficulties which are peculiar to these children and to devise ways and means of coping with them constructively.

President's Message

— WILLIAM S. GRAY —

THE MERGER of ICIRI and NART was overwhelmingly approved by the members of both organizations. Fewer than three percent of the total number who returned ballots, and not more than seven percent of those in either organization, voted against the merger. With such hearty approval the International Reading Association starts on its career under highly favorable conditions.

Before proceeding farther I wish to pay high tribute to the leadership and fine work which has been done during the past decade by NART and ICIRI. The pioneers of these organizations recognized the urgent need for united effort in improving specific aspects of reading. They developed under serious limitations the foundations of two notable organizations. Through the intervening years they and their followers have worked loyally, vigorously and usually at great personal sacrifice to achieve the basic purposes underlying the respective associations. At the close of 1955 each association was rendering a unique and distinguished service and was increasing rapidly in strength and influence.

The merger was conceived and carried through primarily for two reasons. Experience had shown that there was of necessity much overlapping in the work of the two associations. It was believed also that their respective pur-

poses could be achieved more widely and effectively through united effort. I know that I express the point of view of every officer and board member of the International Reading Association when I say that we deeply appreciate the honor conferred on us by election to our respective offices. We sincerely hope that we may prove worthy of your confidence. We earnestly seek your wholehearted cooperation in the tasks that lie ahead.

Initial Steps Taken

When a new association is formed from two previous organizations many problems are faced which must be met quickly and effectively. As an initial step the chairmen of the two Merger Committees authorized the new officers and Board of Directors to hold a planning meeting as soon as the merger was assured. Such a meeting was held on November 26th in New York City. Early in December letters were written by the Presidents of NART and ICIRI to all local and regional groups in their respective associations informing them that the merger had been approved and advising them concerning the steps by which new charters in IRA could be secured. Furthermore, the Secretary of NART sent notices to all its members notifying them of the expiration of their membership on December 31 and urg-

ing them to send in dues for 1956 in IRA. The response thus far has been very encouraging. Finally, the records of both organizations were brought together on December 31 and are now in the process of being unified.

During December approximately two hundred letters were prepared, inviting former members of NART and ICIRI to serve as chairmen and members of committees in IRA. Thus far only one declination has been received and that for a very good reason. The membership of the Publications Committee and the Editorial Board of *The Reading Teacher* is reported elsewhere in this volume. Space will not permit the announcement here of the personnel of all the other committees. Suffice it to say that on January 1 the merger had been effected and all the committees provided for by the By-laws had been appointed and were ready to function. In addition a series of special committees had been organized to study a number of challenging problems which IRA faces if it is to function most effectively in the future.

Next Steps

Of large importance is the immediate reorganization of previous groups in ICIRI and NART into active councils in IRA. The necessary forms and directions were sent out by the Secretary-Treasurer early in January. It is hoped that many local groups have already applied for new charters. Others are urged to do so at once. There should be no cessation in the professional activities of any group. Within a short time each group

will be asked to name delegates to the Assembly which will be held in Chicago on May 11 and 12. Steps should be taken at once to insure one or more delegates from each local group. Many plans and policies for the future will be considered at length and it is essential that every local and regional group be represented.

A second problem faced is to expand and modify the content of *THE READING TEACHER* so that it will serve the needs of those interested in either developmental, corrective or remedial reading, or in any combination of them. Prior to the merger the Editor of *THE READING TEACHER* had made plans for both the February and April issues. It did not seem advisable to abandon those plans. Neither was the Editor and his staff prepared to adopt without careful study major changes in the content and organization of *THE READING TEACHER*. However, space has been reserved both in this and in the April issue for materials of special interest to former NART members. The Publications Committee and the Editorial Board are now making a careful study of plans by which the journal can serve adequately the interests of all groups that are vitally concerned with the improvement of reading.

A third problem relates to the best form of organization to insure the efficient functioning of local and regional groups. Prior to the merger, all local and state groups in ICIRI were in direct contact with the Organization Chairman. In NART the local groups were under the immediate

direction of regional chairmen. The By-laws of IRA do not provide explicitly as yet for the organization and direction of local and intermediate councils. It is obvious that they cannot be directed solely by the Organization Chairman. Accordingly, committees have been appointed to study and report at the February meeting of the Board of Directors on such matters as the most effective way of organizing local and intermediate councils for purposes of supervision, the problems faced by such councils, and the nature of the activities that can be carried on to insure maximum service to members. Specific proposals will be made at the annual meeting for consideration by members of the Assembly.

The Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be held at the Morrison Hotel in Chicago on May 11 and 12. In order to justify the time and expense involved in attending the annual meeting, a program must be provided that is forward-looking, inspiring, provocative and constructive. Furthermore, the annual meeting provides an excellent opportunity for the Association to exert dynamic leadership in the improvement of reading. To this end the officers, program committee and Board of Directors are attempting to plan a program of wide appeal and genuine worth. The details will be presented in the April issue of *The Reading Teacher*. The outline that follows provides an overview of preliminary plans: Theme: "Better Readers for Our Times"

Friday A. M.

GENERAL SESSION

1. "What Are the Reading Needs of Today's Children and Youth?"
2. "What Is the Need for Better Readers as Viewed by the Public?"
(Discussion by a representative group of citizens)

SECTIONAL MEETINGS

"Do Our Reading Programs Meet Today's Needs?"

Criteria for effective programs will be presented at each of the following levels: primary grades; middle grades; junior high school grades; senior high school grades; college; adult; a twelve-year program (administrative and supervisory section).

Friday P. M.

GENERAL SESSION

1. The Progress Achieved in Developing Efficient Readers.
2. The Challenging Problems and Controversial Issues Still Faced.

SECTIONAL MEETINGS

What Do Tested Experience and Research Show Are the Most Effective Procedures Concerning: — (a) The Place and Nature of Reading Readiness, (b) Grouping and Promotion in Relation to Progress in Reading, (c) When and How Word Attack Skills Should Be Taught, (d) Provision of Reading Materials Appropriate to Maturity Levels, (e) Responsibility and Methods of Promoting Growth in and through Reading in Content Fields, (f) How to Meet the Need for Higher Level Reading Competence,

(g) The Place and Methods of Securing Intelligent Parent Cooperation, and (h) Improving the Quality of Reading Instruction.

Friday Evening

GENERAL SESSION

"Promoting Better Readers Through the Use of Mass Media and Other Aids to Learning." Through the cooperation of educational broadcasting and television agencies, plans are being laid for a spectacular, informative and inspiring program. Various methods which have been developed recently will be shown in as realistic form as possible.

Saturday Morning

"Improving the Efficiency of Poor Readers."

GENERAL SESSION

"Why Many Pupils Read Below Expectancy" (a speaker and three discussants).

SECTIONAL MEETINGS

"Classroom Methods of Identifying and Diagnosing Pupils Who Read Below Expectancy."

"Clinical Procedures in Diagnosing Seriously Retarded Readers."

"Classroom Procedures in Correcting Reading Retardation" (including methods of grouping): (a) at the elementary level; (b) at the high school level.

"Methods of Stimulating and Helping Gifted Pupils Attain Their Reading Potentials."

"Therapeutic and Remedial Teaching Procedures for Seriously Handicapped Readers."

"Administrative Procedures in Providing for Retarded Readers" (Administrative and Supervisory Section).

Luncheon Meeting

"The Role and Challenge of IRA"—by the President.

Afternoon Meetings

1. Meeting of the Assembly consisting of the officers, members of the Board of Directors and representatives of local and intermediate councils. Constructive reports relating to all aspects of the association's work will be presented and considered.

2. Sectional Meetings. "How Can the Conference Proposals for Achieving Better Readers Be Put into Effect?" Special sections will be provided for the following levels: primary grades, middle grades, junior high school grades, senior high school grades, and college, and for administrators and supervisors.

Early in April detailed plans for the Annual Meeting will be sent out along with the ballots for officers for 1956-57. Instructions for registering for the meeting and for securing hotel reservations will also be included. Make plans now to attend the annual meeting in Chicago without fail.

Series of Reading Programs To Be Presented at AASA Convention

A series of programs dealing with the teaching of reading will be presented during the week of February 20th at Atlantic City during the annual conference of the American Association of School Administrators and affiliated organizations. The International Reading Association has assisted in planning these meetings and in securing speakers.

On Tuesday, February 21st, the IRA will cooperate with the National Society for the Study of Education in the presentation of its yearbook, entitled "Adult Reading." One of the featured speakers will be Dr. Ruth Strang, past-president of the IRA, former president of the NART and also Director of the ICIRI.

On the four afternoons of Monday, February 21st through Thursday, February 23rd, there will be programs dealing with the teaching of reading. Each will be set up on a different organizational pattern as an experiment in effective program planning under the direction of the Committee for the Advancement of School Administration, a division of the AASA. The four programs and participants are as follows:

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH: An interview by a school superintendent and a magazine editor of several research experts in the field of reading instruction. *Interviewers:* Cecil E. Spearman, Superintendent of Schools, Hinsdale, Illinois, and Arthur H. Rice, Editor,

The Nation's Schools. Research experts: Dr. William S. Gray, Dr. Emmett A. Betts, Dr. Paul Witty.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST: Presentation of two papers on current controversies in the teaching of reading with interrogation by a panel of school superintendents. *Speakers:* Dr. Guy L. Bond, School of Education, University of Minnesota; and Morton Botel, Reading Consultant, Bucks County Schools, Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22ND: A filmed and recorded description of the reading program in the public schools of Wilmington, Delaware, followed by a panel which will discuss the implications of this program. *Presentation of the Wilmington program:* E. L. Whigham, Director of Instruction, Wilmington, Delaware, and a committee of Wilmington teachers and supervisors. *Panel:* Dr. Nila Banton Smith; Dr. Arthur I. Gates; T. C. Bird, Superintendent of Schools, Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Clyde U. Phillips, Superintendent of Schools, Hays, Kansas.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD: No formal presentation. A panel of superintendents and reading specialists will discuss questions for the purpose of bringing out the results of the three earlier meetings.

These programs have been prepared by a committee headed by Dr. Nancy Larrick, president-elect of IRA. Other members of the committee are:—Dr. Nila B. Smith, Dr. Albert J. Harris, Dr. Anne McKillop, and Dr. Jeanne Chall.

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Report of the Ninth Annual NART Conference

SHIRLEY ULLMAN WEDEEN

BROOKLYN COLLEGE

About 900 attended the Ninth Annual Conference of the National Association for Remedial Teaching. This was a two-day conference which took place at Columbia University and the Hotel Roosevelt on October 28, and at Hunter College on October 29. President Ruth Strang presided. The theme was "Developing Maximum Reading Power Among Gifted Students."

Friday morning at Columbia was devoted to Demonstrations of Remedial Methods and Materials. There were two case presentations and demonstrations in a one-way vision room.

Diagnostic Findings and Demonstration of a Remedial Session with a Case of Severe Reading Disability. Moderator: Herbert Nechin, Director, Educational Clinic, City College, New York, New York.

Diagnosis and Demonstration by: Beatrice Lieben, Educational Clinic, City College.

The case presented was that of J. aged 12-10, seventh grade referred to the Clinic for psychological evaluation and remediation of reading difficulty. Findings: He was of average intelligence, a total non-reader with feelings of tremendous anxiety bordering on terror where reading was concerned. A large obese boy, he had had delayed

speech, showed a mixed lateral dominance pattern and in general gave evidence of slow physical maturation. The hypothesis was that lack of initial readiness, inappropriate instruction and inability to overcome initial handicaps because of personality factors, allowed for his present severe reading handicap. Personality-wise he was found to be a passive, conforming boy with such strong feelings of impotence that he could make little use of inner resources when faced with challenging tasks. A further hypothesis was that slow maturation and its concomitant feelings of inferiority as well as persistent parental over-evaluation of this delay were primary factors in his personality and emotional development.

J. was tutored primarily by graduate students in the Remedial Reading Service for approximately thirty-four, forty-five minute sessions. Methods and materials for older pupils functioning at the non-reader level were reviewed as well as present procedures.

The demonstration was of a typical, though abbreviated, reading session with J. performing as he usually does in his regular sessions. Activities included oral reading on second-grade level, review of unfamiliar words, short vowel sounds, functional vocab-

ulary, silent independent reading and a game emphasizing short vowel sounds.

An Approach to Group Work in Remedial Reading.

Moderator:

Max Siegel, Assistant Professor, Department of Personnel Service and Chief Psychologist, Community Counseling Center, Brooklyn College, New York.

The Reading Group with:

Fannie Mendelsohn, Senior Reading Clinician, Community Counseling Center, Brooklyn College.

The program described has been developed over the past seven years at the Brooklyn College Community Counseling Center, as a non-profit service to the community. Children and adolescents referred to this Center because of learning or other problems are first given a complete psychological examination, to include measures of intelligence, achievement, personality, vision, laterality and specific reading patterns. Provision for other diagnostic measures, such as ophthalmological, endocrinological, otological, etc. is made. Each case is assigned to a clinical psychologist, who is responsible for the diagnostic study, counseling of the parents, recommendations regarding suitability for the program, and continuous coordination with the remedial worker during the course of the program. Children attend groups of four or five in size, for three hours per week (generally, two sessions of one and one-half hours each, or three sessions of one hour). The Worker assigned to

each group is called a Reading Clinician, and is a psychologically trained person. Principles of group psychotherapy are related to the remedial program in which the interpersonal relationships among the children and between each child and clinician are stressed. Wherever feasible, concurrent group counseling is carried on with the mothers on the basis of one group meeting weekly. Every four weeks each reading clinician meets with the parents of all his groups in a group session, followed by individual half-hour conferences with each parent. Wherever indicated, the parent is referred back to the clinical psychologist, for consultation around adjustment difficulties beyond the reading sphere. The staff psychiatrist is consulted as necessary.

Limitations of the program include costs and adequate personnel. Relationship of individual to group work is centered upon failures in the program, acting out or destructive youngsters, and experience in the group.

That afternoon saw a joint meeting with the Educational Records Bureau at the Hotel Roosevelt.

Using the theme "Developing Maximum Reading Power Among Gifted Students," as a frame of reference, two panel groups were organized, one representing the viewpoint of the student, the other that of the adult.

Chairman:

Ruth Strang, Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

Student Panel:

Judith Austin, Riverdale Country School for Girls.

Richard Benjamin, School of Performing Arts.

William Borchard, Riverdale Country School.

Alex Farkas, School of Performing Arts.

Catherine B. Heller, Washington Irving High School.

Gayl H. Irwin, Washington Irving High School.

Charles Maier, Scarsdale High School.

Jennifer Seymour, Scarsdale High School.

Reading experiences considered profitable by panel members were: reading as preparation for research reports; reading aloud in class; class discussion of assigned material, and reading of material related to life situations with which they could identify. All thought variety in reading a necessity.

Some of the deficiencies noted were: concentration on phonetics in early training, rather than meaning; over-simplified and repetitious reading material leading to boredom; lack of training in eye movements; over-emphasis in rate of reading rather than comprehension and particularly, a slowness of assignments at a pace set by the slower readers.

The need for discrimination in reading was discussed as a sign of the mature reader. Some panel members felt that comics, and, in some instances, television, like the comics, lead to spoon-feeding and a lulling of the intellect.

The panel suggested the following improvements:

(1) Place a concrete goal before

the student; (2) improvement in comprehension techniques; (3) enthusiasm and friendliness on the part of the teacher; (4) more selected reading material.

In closing Dr. Strang stressed the need for integrating reading development with the total development of the gifted child.

Adult Panel:

Dr. Strang

Frederick B. Davis, Director, Educational Clinic, Hunter College.

Katherine E. Torrant, Reading Consultant, Newton, Massachusetts, Public Schools.

Nancy Young, Curriculum Coordinator, Bureau of Curriculum Research, Board of Education, New York City.

Fred. B. Davis described a test designed to measure and increase reading comprehension, to understand a writers motivation, his literary techniques and devices. Comprehension rather than the mechanics of reading must be emphasized for the gifted student.

Katherine E. Torrant called for increased parental study of the gifted child so as better to understand his anxieties and tensions. In the school, she felt the gifted child should be integrated rather than segregated. Increased teacher insight of child via counseling and group dynamics technique was urged.

Dr. Nancy Young stressed the need for a variety of reading outlets to permit progress without boredom. She felt too that integration rather than segregation was needed. Grouping if



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required could be done by having one story at three levels of difficulty or by a class research group.

Reading at home is a useful adjunct activity. In this regard, parallel reading by teacher and parents is urged as is home and classroom training in recall and memory techniques.

The Friday morning program focused attention on the reading problems faced in the content fields. It was introduced by an address by Dr. William S. Gray on "Meeting Reading Needs in the Content Field." As a background for the sectional meetings that followed he pointed out the need for, and types of guidance essential if reading is to render maximum service as an aid to learning in the content fields. The constructive proposals made related to the following essential activities: Maintaining and strengthening basic reading attitudes and skills; developing the new understandings and skills needed; training pupils to read effectively for different purposes; promoting skill in the use of many sources of information; cultivating avocational reading interests; and diagnosing and correcting deficiencies in reading in the respective content fields.

An extension of this theme was presented from two viewpoints; that of literature presented by Leland B. Jacobs, Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University; and that of Science and Mathematics presented by Brenda Lansdown, Department of Education, Brooklyn College, New York.

Seven sections were organized to concentrate on specialized interests of

the general theme. Each section had the advantage of resource people representing various aspects within the same designated academic categories.

• • •

Group I: Primary Grades

Recorders: Anne Goldstein, Ruth Jacobson.

Chairman: La Verne Strong, Curriculum Consultant, State Department of Education, Hartford, Connecticut.

Speaker: A. Sterl Artley, Professor of Education, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.

Panel: Marie Doran, First-Grade Teacher, East Williston, New York; Amy F. Mayo, Language Arts Consultant, American Book Company, Marblehead, Massachusetts.

A. Sterl Artley gave the major responsibilities of the teacher:

1. To provide the initial steps in a sound basic reading program regardless of content areas.
2. To use a meaningful approach.
3. To develop the ability to interpret.
4. To provide for continuous sequential growth of the child based on the understanding that all teachers build foundations and readiness for the next level.

Miss Doran pointed out that "We must build up confidence of the little 'guys and dolls.'"

• • •

Group II: Intermediate Grades

Recorders: Margaret Beyer, Elsie Stahl.

Chairman: Albert J. Harris, Director,

Educational Clinic, Queens College, New York.

Speaker: Jack Tanzman, Plainview Public Schools, Plainview, Long Island.

Panel: Nancy Larrick, Education Director, Children's Books, Random House, New York; Frances Starr, Elementary Supervisor, Washingtonville, New York.

Mr. Tanzman presented his approach to the subject of Remedial Reading in the Intermediate Grades. His presentation was illustrated by means of a series of slides which showed Mr. Tanzman and his children at work.

Basic Principles presented:

1. A teacher must know his pupils.
2. Intelligent grouping rests upon such knowledge.
3. Basic reading instruction must aim to develop, improve or maintain those skills and abilities which pupils need in their varying reading experiences.

Significant facets of Mr. Tanzman's program:

1. The physical arrangement of the pupils in ability groupings.
2. A general reading assignment is ready for the children upon their arrival in the classroom each day.
3. Three reading groups in the basic reading instruction program.
4. Definite procedures for independent group work.
5. Capitalize on pupil interest to reach children with specific reading problems. (Construction of rat cages and playground, pro-

viding water for the classroom, learning how to use a kiln.)

6. Many reading materials at different grade levels are available to the children.
7. A classroom environment in which children can learn orderly organization of materials of instruction.
8. The teacher-pupil relationship must be one which reflects a team operation.
9. The parents must be made to feel part of the team, too.

• • •

Group III: Junior High School Grades

Recorders: Kate Miano, Frederick Cuttitta.

Chairman: Katherine E. Torrant, Reading Consultant, Newton, Massachusetts Public Schools.

Speaker: H. Alan Robinson, Coordinator of Reading, Memorial Junior High School, Valley Stream, New York.

Panel: Eleanor Fitzgerald, Center Junior High School, Norwalk, Connecticut; Leonard W. Joll, Consultant, Reading and English, State Department of Education, Hartford, Connecticut.

Mr. Robinson made the following salient points in his presentation of Remedial Reading in the Content Areas, on the junior high school level:

1. Remedial reading is an adjustment of instruction to meet individual needs and can take place anywhere.
2. The lists of reading skills whether in literature or in science are

the same general skills; they differ in the way they are applied in the content areas.

3. We must analyze these skills and get away from our fears that they do not apply. The content teacher should develop special skills for the subject. The children should know what skill is being developed.
4. The content teacher looks at the curriculum areas and develops special skills for the subject to meet the needs of pupils.
5. Children cannot learn to apply every skill in the English content area. When application comes in another area the skill is emphasized and reenforced.
6. Children should know what skill is being developed and for what purpose.
7. Make use of a readability formula—Yoakam, Dale—Chall, Lorge, Flesch,—which serves as a signpost or clue to the difficulty of the material used.
8. The aim of the junior high school is to construct tools and refinish and repolish skills; without tools pupils give parrot information.
9. Rate of reading is the rate of comprehension.
10. Teachers as partners in teaching reading should share in the responsibility of suggesting teaching techniques and of ways of knowing children.

Mr. Robinson concluded with the significant sentence, "Let's aim for every teacher being a part-time teacher of reading!"

Leonard W. Joll focused attention upon the criteria for choosing textbooks which are:

1. Does the textbook have chapter headings which, by themselves, provide a logical and adequate outline of the book?
2. Is the text readable in terms of vocabulary level, clarity of sentence structure suited to the children's ability?
3. Are the number of concepts introduced per page appropriate to the children's ability to absorb them?

• • •

Group IV: Senior High School Grades

Recorders: William Elfert, Josephine Mosley.

Chairman: David L. Shepherd, Secondary School Reading Consultant, Norwalk, Connecticut.

Speaker: Elizabeth A. Simpson, Director, Reading Service, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, Illinois.

Panel: Florence V. Hickey, Reading Consultant, Department of Education, Fairfield, Connecticut; Margaret A. Nolan, Supervisor of English, High School Division, Board of Education, New York City.

Dr. Simpson pointed out that all staff members need to emphasize the teaching of reading and all must contribute to the answer to the question: "How can we all help high school students to read better?" She then listed ten points that give a framework for the teaching of reading.

1. The ability to read is one of the

for progress in reading • • • • •

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tests of general ability and success.

2. Slow learners remain in school longer today and cause a widening of the range of reading ability in high school classes.
3. Reading is the basic tool of learning and is necessary to school success.
4. Today's knowledge of how and what to teach in reading is greater and more specific than ever before.
5. A large number of high school students do not read up to their capacity.
6. Effective reading skills are a *must* not only for college success but for business or career success as well.
7. Drop-outs create an increasing problem. More than half are retarded pupils.
8. All reading training must be developmental.
9. Recent studies show a positive relationship between reading retardation and delinquency.
10. A student finds greater pleasure and satisfaction in school and in life when he reads better.

What can teachers of content areas do to teach reading? They must:

1. Diagnose reading abilities in the class (formally or informally).
2. Introduce the textbook early to familiarize pupils with what is expected.
3. Train pupils how to read for assignments, how to take notes, and to prepare for an examination.
4. Show pupils how to use source material.
5. Teach the use of library facilities.
6. Help pupils to locate and use materials of suitable difficulty.
7. Teach necessary vocabulary.
8. Teach pupils how to take notes for different purposes.
9. Teach study techniques for each type of assignment.
10. Establish readiness and purpose for each lesson.
11. Differentiate assignments for those of different abilities.
12. Develop comprehension by controlling sequence of reading assignments.
13. Use pupil formulated questions to teach importance of an item as well as types of questions needed.

• • •

Group V: College and Adult

Recorder: Lillian O'Connor.

Chairman: Miriam Schleich, Director, Hofstra College Reading Center, Hofstra College, Hempstead, New York.

Speaker: Phillip Shaw, Supervisor of the Reading and Study Program, Brooklyn College, New York.

Dr. Shaw pointed out that the current revolution in the field of corrective teaching has established the teacher of college freshmen as a specialist. As such, his credo should be: Incoming freshmen are high-school "pupils" who need to become college "students." To get the most out of college, lower freshmen need to develop their scholastic abilities, can do



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so, must be taught to do so, and depend upon each individual instructor to help them to do so in his particular subject. Each instructor of lower freshmen, therefore, should (1) help his students to increase their ability to read textbooks and reference materials in his particular field, (2) lead his students to develop their verbal strength in his field, (3) aid his students in developing other skills leading to proficiency and scholarship in his field, (4) anticipate the special needs of his deficient students, (5) induce his students to utilize their pre-course experiences in his field, (6) create in the minds of his students a strong impression of design in his courses, and (7) cultivate his students' interest in voluntary reading.

• • •

Group VI: Administrators and Supervisors

Recorders: Raymond Waller, Renee J. Fulton.

Chairman: Edward C. Pooler, Principal, Kendall Elementary School, Norwalk, Connecticut.

Speaker: Helen M. Robinson, Director, Reading Clinic, University of Chicago.

Panel: Helen Blausen, Supervisor of Reading Instruction, Board of Education, New York City; Mary E. Coleman, Director, Reading Clinic, George Washington University, Washington, D. C.

Miss Robinson stated three problems to be remedied: 1—there are those who read satisfactorily in a cursive way, but who have not learned to

employ study-type reading skills; 2—there are those whose general reading skills are sufficiently retarded, despite good intelligence, they cannot read the materials in any fashion; 3—there are those who are slow learners of varying degrees, who can neither read the texts; nor can they understand the concepts presented in the average curriculum.

Suggested remedies:

1—Learn specific techniques of reading for study in each content field.

2—Concepts must be learned through experiences—direct where possible.

3—Remediation in specialized vocabulary, symbols, abbreviations, maps, graphs, diagrams, pictures and other learning aids used in books.

4—Must learn to read according to specific demands.

5—Speed of reading must be varied depending on the purpose and familiarity of the materials.

Miss Robinson concluded with, "Experience has shown that regardless of the techniques used, reading instruction will improve to the extent that administrators and teachers become interested in the problem and apply themselves to seeking solutions."

• • •

Group VII: Individual and Small Groups

Recorders: Geraldine Kennedy, Christine Christie.

Chairman: Norma Gilbert, Elementary Reading Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Speaker: Florence G. Roswell, In

Charge, Remedial Teaching Service, Educational Clinic, City College, New York.

Panel: Beverly Schillinger, Educational Clinic, Hunter College, New York; Edith D. Wile, Reading Consultant, Northside School, East Williston, New York.

Miss Roswell stated that therapeutic results can be obtained through careful selection of stories and material. When stories are directly related to the student's problem areas it is possible to observe his reactions to them.

Miss Roswell presented two cases to prove her hypothesis. The first retarded reader was Tom who apparently lacked recognition. When it became possible for him to identify with a story personality, he became more cooperative and easier to work with. Materials then were given to him which pointed out to him that he was not alone with a problem; that others overcame failure, too; that work had value. Improvement appeared in his reading, spelling, and attitude.

The second case was Jim, who was too emotionally disturbed to start reading. Therefore, at first, stories were read to him. In the selection of these stories problem areas which faced him were chosen. He was not alone. After a reading background was established he was no longer intellectually barren. He began to read.

Miss Roswell was not interested in reading techniques, *per se*, since establishing a good relationship was the most vital object in this psycho-therapeutic remedial reading situation.

Regional Notes

EDITED BY MAXWELL I. RAPHAEL

DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL CHAIRMEN OF NART IN 1955

Year of Transition— and Achievement

From every point of view, the year 1955 marked an important milestone in the life of NART. The move for affiliation with ICIRI put everyone in a state of expectancy and, in rare instances, of uncertainty about the future. It is, therefore, a source of deep gratification to be able to report, despite these circumstances, an impressive record of achievement and of undiminished vigor in the regional activities of NART. For this splendid result all credit is due the regional and area chairmen, and all those who la-

bored with loyalty and unselfish devotion to the aims and interests of their organization.

The following is a review, by regions, of activities reported since the last account published in the spring number of NART News.

Region 1, New England.—Interest in reading improvement has brought a number of inquiries to the Boston Public Library regarding available resources and materials on the subject. In response to this widespread interest, the library, in cooperation with local members of NART, has formulated plans for the establishment in the

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library of an Institute of Improved Reading Services. The plans include assembling books and other materials and arranging lectures and meetings of teachers and the general public for the discussion of questions relating to reading.

The first such meeting was held on the evening of November 17. The program consisted of two parts:—(1) a general session, presided over by William G. Perry Jr., Director of the Bureau of Study Council, Harvard University and co-editor, with Charles P. Whitlock, of the Harvard Reading Films. Mildred G. Downes, reading consultant at Wellesley College and other schools and colleges in the Greater Boston area, spoke on the subject "Adults Read to Learn," exploring such questions as, "What is the nature of good reading? How may the average reader best improve his skill? What are the common misconceptions about reading improvement? What are the reading disabilities requiring remedial treatment?" (2) Group meetings with "Resource Persons" to discuss such questions as "The Problems of Parents of Elementary School Children," with Marguerite G. Sullivan, assistant superintendent, Boston Public Schools; "Problems of Parents of High School Students," with Dr. Olive S. Niles, director of the Boston University Adult Reading Center; "Getting the Most out of a Book," with Mildred G. Downes and Louisa S. Metcalf, Readers Adviser for Adults, Boston Public Library; "The Special Reading Disabilities of Adults," with Sister Mary Nila, director of the Archbishop Cushing Education Clinic; and

"The Nature of Speed Reading, Including Mechanical Devices," with Robert G. Hall, regional chairman of NART.

Last spring questionnaires were mailed to the New England membership of NART to ascertain their views on a variety of subjects relating to NART activities. A majority of those who answered indicated a preference for small local, one-day conferences at which they might discuss common problems informally and learn what is being done in other schools and by other teachers in their localities. An advisory committee working with Mr. Hall, the regional chairman, is planning a series of such meetings for the academic year 1955-56.

Regional II, New York State.—Dr. Max Siegel, regional chairman, reports the formation of a Manhattan chapter of NART, with the following officers: President, Dr. Jerry Weiss, director of remedial reading at the Rhodes School; President-elect, Gussie Mohrer, reading consultant for the Board of Education; Recording Secretary, Abraham Cheiney, remedial reading teacher; Secretary and Treasurer, Louise W. Anderson, reading consultant for the Board of Education.

A cordial welcome to the youngest member of the NART family.

Region VI, Central.—"Techniques and Materials of Remediation" was the theme of the spring reading conference of the Wisconsin Area NART, held at the Schroeder Hotel in Milwaukee on Saturday, May 14. Dr. Mary C. Austin, formerly director of the Reading Improvement Service at Western Reserve University, now at

the School Education, Harvard University, and Dorothy Gardner, director of the Reading Center, Rufus King High School of Milwaukee, were the speakers.

At the morning session Dr. Austin illustrated and discussed materials for use at the elementary school level; at the afternoon session she discussed the principles governing the selection of materials. Miss Gardner demonstrated and discussed materials useful at the secondary level.

The Cardinal Stritch College annual reading conference, under the direction of Sister M. Julitta, area chairman, was held on Saturday, October 8. The principal speakers were Dr. Paul McKee, director of elementary

education, Colorado State College, and Mildred Celia Letton, assistant professor of education, University of Chicago. At the morning session, presided over by Rev. Goebel, superintendent of the Milwaukee Catholic Schools, Dr. McKee spoke on "A Suggested Program of Reading Instruction to Promote Growth in and through Reading." He later addressed a primary level group on "Developing Independence in Attacking Strange Words," and an intermediate and upper grade level group on "Developing Independence in Handling Meaning Difficulties in Reading." Dr. McKee also delivered the closing address on "From Listening to Reading." Miss Letton spoke at the morning session on "Integration of the Developmental

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Reading Program in the English Program"; at the afternoon session she discussed "Promoting Growth through Reading in the Content Areas." Lecture-demonstrations and general discussion rounded out the day-long conference, attended by over 1000 persons.

At the semi-annual business meeting held the same day, Dorothy Gardner was elected treasurer, and Mildred Brady, reading consultant, of Racine, Wisconsin, secretary, of the Wisconsin area.

Region VIII, Southwest.—The Eastern Missouri area of NART held a reading conference at Washington University, in St. Louis, on Saturday, October 1, under the direction of Dr. Ralph W. House, regional chairman. The morning session included a demonstration in "Syllable Phonics" by Dr. House, a lecture on "Implementing a Levels Program in Reading" by Lucille Berkel, of the St. Louis Public Schools, and a lecture on "Reading Difficulty . . . a General Language Problem" by Dr. Ruth H. Solomon, of the University of Chicago Reading Clinic. The afternoon session featured a lecture on "Instructional Materials that may be used with any Series of Readers" by Dr. Solomon, a lecture on "Guiding Pupils' Emotional Health through Reading" by Dr. Earl G. Herminghaus, of the Department of Education, Washington University, and a lecture on "Can we Vitalize our Reading Programs?" by Miss Berkel.

On Saturday, October 29, the Eastern Kansas-Western Missouri area of NART held a conference at the Cen-

tral Junior High School in Kansas City, Missouri. This conference was also under the direction of Dr. House, and consisted of a morning and an afternoon session. At the morning session Dr. Robert Ridgeway, of the School of Education, University of Kansas, talked on "Experience of the University of Kansas Reading Clinic in the Training of Remedial Teachers," and Dr. Solomon repeated her lecture on "Reading Difficulty . . . a General Language Problem," which she delivered at the Washington University meeting. Dr. Solomon also repeated, at the afternoon session, the lecture on "Instructional Materials that may be used with any Series of Readers," and Dr. Ridgeway spoke on "The Importance of Factors of *Interest* and *Readability* in Materials for Retarded Pupils." Under the supervision of Lola McNaughton, Principal of the Parker School, Helen Muncil, a teacher at the school, gave a sixth-grade reading demonstration, using three groups of pupils; and under the supervision of Beth Heplar, Principal of the Mark Twain School, Gwen McNaughton, a teacher at the school, gave a sixth-grade arithmetic demonstration.

Region X, West.—The first fall meeting of the California Association for Remedial Teaching (affiliated with NART) was held on October 1 at the University of California at Los Angeles, under the chairmanship of Frances Pryor, president of the association. Dr. James Coleman, Associate Professor of Education at the University and administrator of the

Clinical School, spoke on "Modern Remedial Education," with particular reference to the manner in which this subject is administered at the Clinical School of U.C.L.A. The program, he stated, had three main objectives: (1) service to about 45 serious remedial cases at a time; (2) training about 55 student teachers; and (3) conducting a research bureau in this field. He explained the processes of diagnosing students from the medical, psychological and sociological points of view, the program for each individual student being determined by an analysis of these diagnostic tests. The requirements for admission, Dr. Coleman stated, were average or higher intelligence, freedom from disabling defects, and a retardation of at least two years

from the expected achievement. He also spoke of the parents' contribution as being one of background enrichment rather than of help in the academic processes. Dr. Coleman answered many questions from the keenly interested audience, and further clarified clinical procedures during a visit to the classrooms of the school.

John Huett, a member of the staff of the Clinical School, gave a detailed account of the school's daily program and delighted his listeners with his enthusiasm and evident enjoyment of the work. The audience also enjoyed hearing from Helen Keller, who organized the first reading room on the U.C.L.A. campus in 1921, and from Lois Osborne, another pioneer in teacher training.

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WHAT OTHER MAGAZINES ARE SAYING ABOUT THE TEACHING OF READING

—MURIEL POTTER LANGMAN—
MICHIGAN STATE NORMAL COLLEGE

"Current Reading Problems: A World View." William S. Gray. *Elementary School Journal*, September, 1955.

Dr. Gray made a preliminary survey for UNESCO of the nature and effectiveness of methods used in teaching reading over all the world, and his article discusses this survey and a revision of it based on criticisms and suggestions solicited from the survey.

His study showed appalling illiteracy among the world's peoples. "As revealed by the most recent available data on literacy, at least 50 per cent of the adult population of the world is wholly illiterate." An additional 15 per cent have had some instruction but are not functionally literate (cannot read at fourth grade level). Of the children of school age, only half go to school; of these, only one of five is receiving education beyond primary level.

As a background for his survey findings on method, Dr. Gray points out that early methods of reading instruction stressed word elements, either letters or sounds, which were combined to form words, and which in turn were combined into phrases and sentences. This is the "synthetic" approach to reading. This method was thought to be economical of time, and effective in that it developed skill in word recognition. After word

recognition skill developed then additional skills and attitudes toward reading could be taught. The "synthetic" method, which proceeded from parts to wholes, was criticised on the ground that children's preferred mode of learning moves from wholes to parts.

The "analytic" method, on the other hand, stressed the acquisition of a sight vocabulary by the beginning reader, with gradual introduction of attention to word parts and phonetic elements as the vocabulary increased. The supporters of this method point out that by its use satisfaction in reading is obtained from the very outset, since in this whole word approach comprehension, not merely word recognition, is the purpose of reading. So long as reading method remained an either-or process, the weaknesses of each of these methods could be pointed out.

Dr. Gray describes the present trend toward combining the two methods into an effective unified program, the "eclectic" method. He praises the balance which this combination makes possible between good attitudes toward reading and emphasis on meaning with accuracy and independence in word recognition. He stresses its value in developing ability to read critically and its effectiveness for the satisfaction of personal needs. He

points out the trend, in the development of teaching materials, toward the consideration of individual interests and special aptitudes, and approves the provision of content on the basis of knowledge of the interests of age groups.

UNESCO, in directing this survey, has focused attention on the need for literacy if the world's peoples are to participate in intelligent world citizenship. It was also concerned to determine by what methods reading skills can most effectively be taught in order to foster literacy rapidly and economically.

An interesting incidental finding of the survey is that wherever objective studies have been made of the reading achievement of both adults and children, about the same percentage of retarded readers is to be found as in the United States. Moreover, both the "analytic" and "synthetic" methods are used in Europe as well as in this country.

"Looking Ahead in Teaching Reading." Nila Banton Smith. *N.E.A. Journal*, October, 1955.

In a period of insecurity like the present, writes Dr. Smith, reading instruction must be responsible for more than methods of teaching and other technical aspects. She urges the development of Americans who read widely and critically, and who weigh evidence and draw conclusions by independent thinking. These readers can be developed only if teachers bend every effort to make reading a wholly satisfying and enjoyable occupation which can compete successfully with radio, television, and pic-

ture magazines. Building intelligent reading abilities and habits can be achieved by the provision and use of increasingly attractive books which provide both information and pleasure and deal with every subject that increasingly curious and sophisticated children may desire.

"Children must be taught to question, reason, compare, draw inferences, generalize, interject ideas of their own, seek interaction of these ideas with others, and draw independent conclusions." They must learn to think critically in order to evaluate materials for objectivity or its absence. "In critical reading, the reader evaluates and passes judgment upon the purpose, the fairmindedness, the bias, or the truthfulness of statements made in text."

More attention must be paid to increasing reading speed, because so much material must be read these days. Dr. Smith points out that we have developed machines for computing and for writing which speed up these processes, but we have not yet speeded up our reading to a comparable degree.

The article concludes with a plea for seeing reading development as a part of total growth, and adjusting our teaching to the rate and continuity of each individual's growth pattern.

"Phonics in the Reading Program: A Review and An Evaluation." Paul A. Witty and Robert A. Sizemore. *Elementary English*, October, 1955.

The writers of this article have reviewed many research experiments, some of them performed as early as

the teens of this century, in their discussion of the place and value of phonics in reading programs. They point out that almost any position regarding the nature and amount of phonics instruction may be documented from the literature they have reviewed on the subject. After examining a number of positions, they conclude with a statement of the trends they recognize in today's teaching, and some recommendations.

They urge the need for a readiness program for phonics, because many five and six year old children are confused by exposure to systems of instruction for which they are not prepared. Moreover, phonics systems may lead young children to attempt word recognition piecemeal instead of as meaningful wholes. Systems of unadulterated phonics are more limited in usefulness than systems using phonics as one aspect of a many-sided technique of word recognition and comprehension. Since some children make satisfactory progress in reading without formal instruction in phonics, while others profit from such formal instruction, careful diagnosis of individual needs is recommended as a preliminary to word analysis instruction. Phonics seems to be most effective when a stock of sight words has been mastered and reading has become a satisfying and meaningful activity.

The writers point out that in their survey of research they find no evidence for Flesch's contention that phonics instruction is not given in American schools in early grades. They suggest the improvement of in-

struction through better preparation of teachers, more classrooms, improved instructional materials, and closer cooperation between home and school. However, they do NOT recommend that parents "take over."

"A Study of Diagnostic and Remedial Procedures in a Reading Clinic Laboratory School." Marjorie Seddon Johnson. *Journal of Educational Research*, April 1955.

The procedures by which retarded readers are helped in reading clinics are clearest to us when we can read descriptions by participants in such programs. The Reading Clinic of the College of the City of New York and the Reading Clinic of the University of Chicago have been thus described in detail, and this article briefly offers a new approach to helping retarded readers through the use of the Reading Clinic Laboratory School at Temple University.

A statistical analysis is made of thirty-four cases of children receiving diagnostic analysis and reading instruction at this Laboratory School. Records obtained through diagnosis, case history and daily instructional records were examined.

Case histories of these children show that about two-thirds of the group suffered from serious social and emotional maladjustments; nearly as many had experienced serious or recurring illness; about two-fifths were retarded in language development; one-fifth had suffered serious head injuries.

More than three-fifths of the group

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showed vision inadequate in some respects. At the time of examination less than one-third of the group wore corrective glasses; after examination more than three-fifths of the children did so. Nearly all had difficulty with visual discrimination of word and letter forms. Tests of both auditory and visual memory span produced poor performance. Many children made higher scores on performance than on verbal tests of intelligence. (The School accepts only children of average intelligence or better.)

A small number of children had suffered hearing loss in the main speech range. Nearly all the children of the group who were tested for auditory discrimination of speech sounds (a group of 18) showed difficulties.

More than two-thirds of the group were boys.

Careful study was made of school record and achievement, of mental and physical development, and of social and emotional adjustment, and the writer generalizes about the group on the basis of her findings. Finally she provides many excellent recommendations for the improvement of clinic procedures, for use in the classroom, for parents, and for additional research.

"Providing for the Individual Reading Needs of Children." Gerald A. Yoakam. *Education Digest*, October 1954.

Dr. Yoakam's article is part of his report in the *Ninth Annual Conference in Reading*, published by the University of Pittsburgh Press. After

discussing the difficulty of grading children's textbooks, and the extent to which readability formulas have helped this grading, he makes some suggestions for choosing and using textbooks in a way to meet the need for materials of varying difficulty within the same classroom.

He recommends that such materials be available, that they be graded objectively and accurately by means of readability formulas, that materials of easier sequence be provided, and that publishers consider supplying "multiple books on the same topics but on different levels of difficulty..."

He then offers some practical suggestions for the use of materials now on the market:

1. Buy several small sets of six to twelve of several different textbooks intended for the same level instead of one large set. This will provide some variations in difficulty level.

2. Measure the readability of books bought in order to ascertain their difficulty levels so they may be used to meet individual needs wisely.

3. Seek books of several different difficulty levels on the same topic at the same grade level.

4. Note that textbooks vary in difficulty from chapter to chapter.

5. Start a subject catalog of references to different topics found in available books. Add the readability level to each title. Use this information in recommending reading to individuals of differing reading ability.

6. Catalog history, geography, science and health books as well as readers.

7. Collect clippings from many sources on topics of interest and catalog them in the same way.

8. Catalog books for free reading and for the classroom library in the same way. Work for variety in difficulty levels, suitable to slow, average and fast readers.

9. Examine reading lists for children in order to add items to your file.

10. Persist in these activities until you have enough differentiated material for your purposes.

Dr. Yoakam then suggests that teachers may reduce the amount of work involved in such a project by organizing to work at it cooperatively. He believes that eventually publishers may take some of the responsibility for providing textbook materials of several levels on the same topic, but at present teachers must solve the problem by their own efforts.

"And It's All Known as Phonics." Anna D. Cordts. *Elementary English*, October, 1955.

Dr. Cordts points out some all too common errors in phonics instruction. She describes and evaluates materials found in some so-called phonics workbooks, and calls attention to some of the mistakes made in using such prepared phonics materials. She dwells particularly on the necessity for hearing as well as seeing similarities in words. "Until children learn to discriminate between the sounds in words, the groundwork in phonics is inadequate." An article that will be very helpful.

"Flash Cards — the Opiate of the Reading Program." Constance McCullough. *Elementary English*, October, 1955.

Here is another lively article by Dr. McCullough, starring her friend "Mabel," the original thinker and lively commentator on reading methods. This time Mabel comes up with some teaching suggestions as well as some pointed criticism. Who says the informative can't be amusing? Read this one and see!

• • •

Syracuse University Seeks Persons For Assistantships and Fellowships

The Reading Laboratory of Syracuse University announces a number of graduate assistantships and teaching fellowships for the year 1956-7. Four teaching fellowships are available in the college and industrial reading programs. One assistant is sought for the elementary and secondary reading clinic, while two research assistantships are available. Applicants should be post master's candidates seeking further training in reading, or Ed. D. and Ph. D. candidates in reading.

Several assistantships are available for the summers of 1956 and 1957. Applicants for assistantships for the summer or for the year 1956-7 should apply to Dr. William D. Sheldon, Director of the Reading Laboratory, 123 College Place, Syracuse 10, New York.

INTERESTING BOOKS FOR THE READING TEACHER

BERTHA B. FRIEDMAN
QUEENS COLLEGE

Brueckner, Leo J., and Bond, Guy L. *The Diagnosis and Treatment of Learning Difficulties*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955. Pp. ix-424. \$5.00.

This valuable book treats both the testing and corrective work necessary for a sound school program in the basic skills. The first chapters discuss the application of tests and other evaluation methods, and general factors to be considered in the diagnosis and improvement of pupil learning. Emphasis is given to planning for both "remedial and preventive" teaching. The major part of the book is devoted to special analysis and treatment of difficulties in reading, arithmetic, oral and written expression, spelling, and handwriting. Extensive discussion is given to the first two of these skills, and this reviewer was particularly impressed with the very thorough chapters on arithmetic learning. The remedial measures suggested are up-to-date and unhackneyed. A helpful concluding chapter discusses organizing the school program for diagnostic work and notes the place of clinical resources for serious disabilities.

The authors state that their book is designed for use both by the student of remedial education and the teacher in the average classroom. The chapters on the separate subjects should serve the purposes of both groups admirably. Questions on test use and interpretation are not given as thorough treatment as in texts limited to this part of the field. Probably this fact is inevitable, and must be traced to lack of space. However, more specific warnings about the use of grade ratings from different test series and about the difficulties of using educational or achievement quotients would be appropriate. Nevertheless, the exist-

ence of a few shortcomings should merely be noted and remedied by the user; the essential soundness of the book should recommend it highly.

*Agatha Townsend, Consultant,
Educational Records.*

Robinson, Helen M., *Corrective Reading in Classroom and Clinic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.

This monograph records the proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Conference on Reading held at the University of Chicago. Except for the first conference and this one, all other conferences have been organized around themes dealing with aspects of developmental reading. There is a wealth of material in this small volume for the college teacher, school administrator, supervisor, classroom teacher, reading consultant as well as clinician. Although the emphasis is largely on teaching individuals with language and experience deficiencies and with specific reading difficulties, attention is given to developmental reading programs as a means of reducing the number of remedial cases.

Dr. Gray's enlightening account of his Unesco study in the first chapter helps to place our problems in a world setting and to point up a world concern for raising the level of literacy. Five major problems are identified by Robinson, namely—securing agreement on the meaning of many basic terms, determining relative merits of teaching all children to read, discovering who needs corrective reading, clarifying certain aspects of rate of reading in relation to comprehension, and the selection and utilization of materials. Frequent references to television throughout the book reflect advances made in television since the earlier con-

ference as they relate to and influence the teaching of reading.

This volume has been written by scores of people who are experts in the field. Spache, for instance, gives a most careful report on vision in relation to reading problems. He challenges data from research studies gathered in an atomistic framework and makes a plea for "exploring the whole child, trying to understand relationships of the environment of the individual, his reactions as shown in personality and physical adjustments, and his reading difficulties" (p. 49).

The need for good materials is stressed in five chapters, "Part of the effectiveness of any program is the amount and kind of materials that are at the teacher's disposal . . . Common sense tells us that if more elementary schools had libraries, there would be far fewer corrective-reading cases . . . A worthy endeavor for teachers interested in the reading program is to work vigorously for the inclusion of an active library in schools that now have none (p. 210). Again and again authors emphasize the need for many books in the classroom—attractive books, spread out on tables in an inviting way as well as on shelves, accessible to children when they are in the mood to read, and books of interest to those who are to read them. We are left with the strong feeling that we must work toward "helping the individual child to select books and helping teachers and librarians select books to have available . . . and eliminating as many as possible of the external barriers to the selection and use of materials for these children" (p. 211). Valuable lists of books and games could be compiled from this monograph. The question is conscientiously asked, "What is happening to children because of the way we are using materials?" Dr. Anderson makes a special plea for teachers to cooperate with publishers in an effort to make further advances in the publication of needed materials. To educators, she says, "Your share in the task is to develop manuscripts based on research, ex-

perience, and conviction. Ours is to produce finished books from the materials which you create . . . We hope you will join with us in meeting the challenge of better materials, not only for the retarded readers, but for all readers in all subjects" (p. 205).

Anyone looking for practical suggestions to improve a school reading program can find help in this monograph in developing word recognition, meaning vocabulary, comprehension, and speed of reading as well as case studies of unique reading problems where these techniques have been applied. The following illustrations have been selected to illustrate other kinds of practical suggestions that are to be found throughout the book. "There should be early discovery of corrective cases (p. 25) . . . We cannot prescribe teaching techniques (p. 33) . . . Attention should be given to retarded readers who are coasting along at the same so-called 'grade level' when an enriched diet is long overdue (p. 34) . . . Eliminate ineffective school practices (p. 62) . . . Appraise the entire school reading program (p. 66) . . . We need to teach our related language skills as reading skills before we teach them as writing skills (p. 243).

The reader is left wondering, as he so often is, after reading a book of this kind, "What is the classroom teacher to do with a child, among many others, who is one of the cases considered 'too hopeless for a clinic to accept'?" Everywhere teachers are looking for some conference to come up with answers to this problem.

Dr. Kottmeyer offers the final challenge as he appeals for "continued improvement of the total reading program and central agencies to keep a reasonable balance between remedial reading and the total program" as well as for doing remedial work "at the right time with the right children and the right teacher" (p. 244).

Margaret B. Park
Brooklyn College, New York

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